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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

OF THE

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

8 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CXC.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM WEDNESDAY, THIRD DAY OF JUNE, 1908
TO WEDNESDAY, TWENTY-FOURTH DAY OF JUNE, 1908.

EIGHTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1908.

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CHRONOLOGY OF "THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES."

THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislativ History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.
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NEW BILLS.

Rule Committee Bill.—To be read a second time upon Thursday, 11th June, and to be printed. [Bill 258] ... 64

Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 259] ... 64

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do meet To-morrow, at Twelve of the Clock."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)
Sir A. Acland-Hood (Somersetshire, Wellington) ... 64
Mr. Speaker ... 64
Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT (WHITSUNTIDE).—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, at its rising to morrow, do adjourn until Wednesday, the 10th June."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)
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Mr. Austin Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) ... 71
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Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.) ... 128
Question put, and agreed to.
Resolved, "That this House, at its rising to-morrow, do adjourn until Wednesday, the 10th June."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

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FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT (ACCIDENTS).

Mr. Glover (St. Helens) 129
Mr. Seddon (Lancashire, Newton) 131

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that the increase in fatal and non-fatal accidents in cases under the Factory and Workshop Act is of such a character as to demand immediate attention, more particularly in so far as it bears upon the organisation of the Factory Department of the Home Office."—(*Mr. Glover.*)

Mr. H. J. Tennant (Berwickshire) 137
Mr. Harwood (Bolton) 139
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 142
Mr. Ramsay Macdonald (Leicester) 151
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 157
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 158

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Luggage (Definition) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Thorne.*)

Sir F. Banbury 160

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday, 15th June.

Police (Weekly Holiday) Bill.—Read a second time.

Bill committed to the Select Committee on Police Forces (Weekly Rest-Day).—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: THURSDAY, 4TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

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Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 161

Great Western Railway Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 161

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 161

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1 Bill) [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment 161

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read a second time and ordered to be considered upon Thursday next 161

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered (under Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 260] 161

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Licensing Bill.—Petition against: to lie upon the Table. Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 24 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 162

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Two petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 162

Mangena, Alfred.—Petition for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table 162

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 162

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Mercantile Marine (Sight Tests).—Report to the Secretary of the Board of Trade upon the Sight Tests used in the Mercantile Marine; to lie upon the Table 162

Local Government Board, Scotland.—Thirteenth Annual Report; to lie upon the Table 162

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Council of the County of Lancaster; to lie upon the Table. Order made by the Council of the City of Worcester; to lie upon the Table 162

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SUPPLY [9TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair].

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £40,830, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs."

Mr. O'Grady (*Leeds, E.*) ... 211

Amendment proposed—

"That the sum proposed to be granted be reduced by £100."

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries, Wages and Allowances) be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. O'Grady.*)

Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.) ... 216
Sir Ivor Herbert (Monmouthshire, W.) ... 221
Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) ... 225
Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) ... 226
Mr. Harwood (Bolton) ... 229
Mr. Hart-Davies (Hackney, N.) ... 232
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick) ... 231
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) ... 246
Mr. Keir Hardie (Merthyr Tydvil ... 252
Mr. Maddison (Burnley) ... 261
Mr. H. C. Lea (St. Pancras, E.) ... 264

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." [Cries of "No."]

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly, "That Item A (Salaries, Wages, and Allowances) be reduced by £100."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 59; Noes, 225. (Division List No. 114.)

Original Question again proposed.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.—Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. J. A. Pease.*)

Adjourned accordingly at Five minutes before Five o'clock till Wednesday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 269

Hurly's Divorce Bill [LORDS].—Read the the third time, and passed, without Amendments ... 269

Burnley Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered: to be read the third time ... 269

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill; Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed ... 269

PETITIONS.

Hypothec Abolition (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 269

ensing Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 9 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 269

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Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 269

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (RECESS).—The following Papers, presented by Command of His Majesty during the Whitsuntide Recess, were delivered to the Librarian of the House of Commons during the Recess, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 14th August, 1896:—

1. Treaty Series (No. 14, 1908).

Declaration between the United Kingdom and Paraguay amending Treaty of Commerce.

2. Mines and Quarries.

General Report and Statistics for the year 1906.

3. Board of Education.

Regulations for Secondary Schools in Wales and Monmouthshire.
Ordered, "That the said Papers do lie upon the Table 269

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Colonial Reports (Annual).—Report No. 558 (Swaziland); to lie upon the Table 270

Merchant Seamen's Fund.—Account presented, of the Receipts and Expenditure under the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [167] 270

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Secretary for Scotland providing for the early closing of certain shops in the Burgh of Greenock; to lie upon the Table 270

Vivisection (Royal Commission).—Fifth Report of the Commissioners; to lie upon the Table 270

Intoxicating Liquor Licences (England and Wales) (Transfers).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 168] 271

Polling Districts (City of London).—Order made by the Justices of the City of London altering the Polling Districts within the City; to lie upon the Table 271

Police (Counties and Boroughs, England and Wales).—Reports of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 169] 271

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4004, 4006 to 4008, 4010, and 4011; to lie upon the Table ... 271

National School Teachers, Ireland (Pension Fund).—Annual Accounts presented; to lie upon the Table 271

East India (Financial Statement).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 170] 271

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

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Old Age Pensions—Finance 277

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.
Reports to lie upon the Table 277

NEW BILL.

Pawning Industrial Tools Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 261] 278

Port of London Bill.—Ordered "That Mr. Ashley be discharged from the Select Committee on the Port of London Bill."
Ordered "That Viscount Castlereagh be added to the Committee"—(*The Master of Elibank*)... 278

SUPPLY [10TH ALLOTTED DAY].
Considered in Committee.
(In the Committee).
[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,500, be granted to His Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Customs Department."
Mr. William Rutherford (Liverpool, West Derby) 279

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. William Rutherford.*)
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) 283
Mr. Smeaton (Stirlingshire) 283
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.) ... 283
Sir A. Acland-Hood (Somersetshire, Wellington)... 287
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 288
Mr. Claude Hay (Shoreditch, Hoxton) 290
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 292
Mr. Summerbell 293
Mr. William Rutherford 293
Mr. Hobhouse 294

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 14; Noes, 112. (Division List No. 115.)

Original Question again proposed.

Mr. Claude Hay ... 295

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Mr. C. Duncan (Barrow-in-Furness) ... 299
Mr. Hart-Davies (Hackney, N.) ... 299
Mr. Hobhouse ... 300

Question put and negatived.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. Motion made and Question proposed, "That a sum not exceeding £1,523,600 be granted to his Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."

Mr. Snowden (Blackburn) ... 302
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 308
Sir F. Banbury ... 312
Mr. McCallum (Paisley) ... 313
Mr. Watt (Glasgow, College) ... 313
Mr. Staveley Hill (Staffordshire Kingswinford) ... 318
Mr. Hobhouse ... 318
Mr. Snowden ... 319

Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,523,500 be granted for the said Service"—(*Mr. Snowden.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 45; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 116.)

Original Questions put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [28TH MAY].

Resolutions reported:—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS V.

1 "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in Aid."

CLASS III.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £127,889, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Inspector of Reformatories, and for the Maintenence of Juvenile Offenders in Reformatory, Industrial, and Day Industrial Schools, and under the Youthful Offenders Act, in Great Britain."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £400,345, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Expenses of the Prisons in England, Wales and the Colonies."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £28,781 be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Maintenance of Criminal Lunatics in the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution postponed.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to,

Postponed Resolution to be further considered To-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.—Resolved, that the House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes after Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 11TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

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Children Bill.—9 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 325

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 7 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table... 325

Port of London Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. Petition against praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table 325

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 325

Women's Enfranchisement Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 325

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

National School Teachers (Ireland) Pension Fund.—Return to be printed. [No. 171] 325

Experiments on Living Animals.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 172] 325

Sick and Wounded in War.—Papers relating to the Geneva Convention; to lie upon the Table 326

Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland).—Seventh Annual General Report of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland; to lie upon the Table 326

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4005 and 4009; to lie upon the Table 326

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post).—Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 19) Warrant, 1908; to lie upon the Table ... 326

Education (Scotland).—Report and Papers relating to the Training of Teachers to lie upon the Table 326

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Trade (Foreign Countries and British Possessions).—Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign countries and British Possessions; to lie upon the Table 326

Exports and Imports (United Kingdom).—Return ordered... 326

Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905.—Return ordered, "as to the proceedings of Distress Committees in England" 326

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British Homes Assurance Corporation 341
Irish Treasury Officials 341
Shinn Evicted Tenants 342
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Business of the House 343

Statute Law Revision Bill [Lords].—Ordered, That so much of the Lords' Message [20th May] as relates to the Resolution, "That it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill are to be referred," be considered forthwith.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Lords' Message considered accordingly.

Resolved, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Resolution

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*) 343

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SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT, Oldham, in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £83,124, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew including certain Grants in-Aid."

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Mr. Laurence Hardy, (Kent, Ashford) 349
Mr. Bennett (Oxfordshire, Woodstock) 354
Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 360
Sir Francis Channing (Northamptonshire, E.) 368
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 375
Mr. Verney (Buckinghamshire, N.) 382
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Mr. Morrell (Oxfordshire, Henley) 393
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Mr. Levy Lever (Essex, Harwich) 398
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Mr. Montagu (Cambridge, Chesterton) 405
Mr. Gretton (Rutland) 409
Mr. Silcock (Somersetshire, Wells)... 416
Mr. Cooper (Southwark, Bermondsey) 412
Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) 417
Mr. Stuart Samuel (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) 422
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) 423
Dr. Rutherford (Middlesex, Brentford) 427

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £83,024, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Summerbell.*)

Colonel Lockwood (Essex, Epping)... 427
Mr. Stanier (Shropshire, Newport) 430
Mr. B. S. Straus (Tower Hamlets, Mile End) 431
Mr. Wills (Dorsetshire, N.) 434
Mr. Bowerman (Deptford) 435
Mr. Meysey-Thompson (Staffordshire, Handsworth) 437
Mr. Rowlands (Kent, Dartford) 439
Mr. Winfrey (Norfolk, S.W.) 440
Sir Edward Strachey 442
Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 447

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

DEBATES REPORTS.—Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in making the arrangements for an official Report of Debates.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*) 448

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock,

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HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 12TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Great Western Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 449

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill.—Presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered under (Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Monday, 22nd June, and to be printed. [Bill 262] 449

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 449

Irish Universities Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 449

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 2 Petitions for alteration: to lie upon the Table. 16 Petitions in favour: to lie upon the Table 449

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Polling Districts (County of Carnarvon).—Order made by the Council of the County of Carnarvon dividing the middle Llandwog Parliamentary Polling district into two separate districts; to lie upon the Table ... 449

Criminal and Judicial Statistics (Ireland)—Criminal and Judicial Statistics of Ireland Part II. Civil Statistics; to lie upon the Table ... 450

Papers laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Medway Conservancy, Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the conservators 450

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Preservatives in Milk and Dairy Produce 450

Annual Leave in the Civil Service 451

Delay in Erection of Labourers' Cottage at Letterkenny 451

Army—Length of Service with Colours and Reserve 452

Disbanding of Territorial Battalions of Strength below 30 per cent. 452

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

Prevention of Crime Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Akers Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) 454
Mr. Pickersgill (Bethnal Green, S.W.) 461
Mr. Clavell Salter (Hampshire, Basingstoke) 465
Mr. Atherley-Jones (Durham, N.W.) 470
Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) 475
Mr. J. M. Robertson (Northumberland, Tyneside) 477
Mr Staveley-Hill (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) 480

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Mr. Maclean (Bath) 483
Mr. Starkey (Nottinghamshire, Newark) 485
Mr. Charles Roberts (Lincoln) 487
Mr. John O'Connor (Kildare, N.) 489
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 491
Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University) 505
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 511
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 513

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 133 ; Noes, 11 (Division List No. 117).

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at eight minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 15TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)—Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, "That the Bill be read a second time" 517

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—Marriages Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill.

Ordered, "That the Bills be read a second time to-morrow." ... 517

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Lords Amendments considered :—Lords Amendments to the Amendment in page 7, line 20, agreed to; Lords Amendment, in page 7, line 20, after Clause 6, to insert Clause 6a, the remaining Amendment, read a second time, amended, and agreed to 517

Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 517

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Comfirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 518

PETITIONS.

Licensing Bill.—Petition against alteration of Clause 20; to lie upon the Table. 9 Petitions in favour: to lie upon the Table 518

Port of London Bill.—Petition against alterations, praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table 518

Tilonko.—Petition of Tilonko, a chief of the Embo tribe of Zulus, for inquiry into his case; to lie upon the Table 518

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RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which Examinations for 1908 shall be held, to lie upon the Table. Rule made by the Intermediate Board for Ireland determining the number of Centre Superintendents to conduct the Examinations in the year 1908; to lie upon the Table ... 518

Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 173] 518

East India (Press Act.)—Full Text of Indian Press Act VII. of 1908; to lie upon the Table 518

East India (Income and Expenditure).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the table, and to be printed. [No. 174]... 519

Africa (No. 3, 1908).—Correspondence respecting the Taxation of Natives and other Questions in the Congo State; to lie upon the Table 519

Savings Banks and Friendly Societies.—Accounts presented; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 175.] 519

Newfoundland (British Trade).—Report upon the Conditions and Prospects of British Trade in Newfoundland; to lie upon the Table 519

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made by the Board of Trade; to lie upon the Table 519

Factory and Workshop (Process of Casting Brass).—Report on the Draft Regulations proposed to be made for Factories in which the process of Casting Brass is carried on; to lie upon the Table 519

Papers laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.

Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure to be printed. [No. 176.]

Inquiry into Charities (County of Berks).—Further Return relative thereto.

Inquiry into Charities (Administrative County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto 520

Old-age Pensions (Non-Contributory Scheme) (Correspondence).—Copy ordered "of Circular Letter issued by the Chief Registrar to the principal Friendly Societies with reference to proposed Non-Contributory Scheme dealing with the subject of Old-age Pensions.

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 177] 520

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Duties of Sorting Clerk at Glasgow 520

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Irish Supplies for the Post Office 558
Whaling and the Herring Industry 559
Land Reform in Scotland 560
Friendly Societies and Old-Age Pensions 561
Pensions Bill and the Closure 563

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES].—A Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of Expenses incurred under any Act of the present session to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Mr. Secretary Gladstone*) ... 564

NEW BILL.

Vehicular Traffic (Regulation of Speed) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 263] 564

Old-Age Pensions Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 564

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon)... 586
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 596
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 613

Amendment proposed.

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'while it is desirable that the State should organise aid for the unfortunate by establishing and assisting a general system of insurance against the principal risks of life it is unjust to spend the taxpayers' money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income, and character."—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. O'Grady (Leeds, E.) 618
Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) 626
Mr. Black (Bedfordshire, Biggleswade) 632
Mr. Staveley Hill (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) 633
Mr. Maddison (Burnley) 636
Mr. Mond (Chester) 640
Mr. Leverton Harris (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) 647
Mr. J. W. Taylor (Durham, Chester-le Street) 653
The Earl of Kerry (Derbyshire, W.) 656
The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Haldane, Haddington) 660
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 672

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

Infant Life Protection (No. 2) Bill.—Order for Second reading read.
Read a second time and committed to a Standing Committee ... 675

Port of London Bill.—Ordered, That the Petition from the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Fulham, praying to be represented by counsel before the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill, be referred to the Committee on the Bill.—(*Mr. Timothy Davies*) ... 676

Adjourned at seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1908.

The Lord Poltimore sat first in Parliament after the death of his father ... 677

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed 677

Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 677

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Read 3ª, and passed 677

Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 677

Draycott Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments; and passed, and returned to the Commons 677

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 677

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to No. 1 Order... 677

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Committed 677

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners ... 677

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Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Hurly's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 677

Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; The said Amendments considered, and agreed to 678

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 678

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to, with an Amendment 678

Hurly's Divorce Bill [H L.].—Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings before this House on the Second Reading, together with the documents deposited in the case, returned from the Commons 678

Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed 678

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [**No. 94**]; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [No. 95]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill [No. 96]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill [No. 97]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill [No. 98].—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners 678

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2ª (The Lord Denman, for the Lord Herschell), and reported from the Committee. [No. 99]... 678

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.] (**Bridgwater and Llandudno Orders**); Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L] (Potteries, etc., Order); Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.] (Sevenoaks and Stourbridge Water Orders); Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) [H.L.] [No. 1 Order]; Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

E. Morley,
L. Ribblesdale (Chairman),
L. Templemore,
L. Leigh,
L. Lochee;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Wednesday the 24th instant, at Two o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills 678

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PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (RECESS).—The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the following Papers having been commanded to be presented to this House by His Majesty had been so presented on the following dates by delivery to the Clerk of the Parliaments, pursuant to Standing Order No. CXI. viz.—

1. Education (Scotland).—I.—Reports, statistics, etc., relating to continuation classes and central institutions (Scotland). II.—Report and papers relating to the training of teachers.

2. Trade Reports: Annual Series. No. 4001. German (Consular District of Berlin). No. 4002. Greece (Corfu). No. 4004. Portugal (Consular District of Oporto). No. 4005. Roumania. No. 4006. Persia (Khorasan). No. 4007. France (Dunkirk). No. 4008. Germany (Leipzig and Chemnitz). No. 4009. Turkey (Constantinople and District). No. 4010. France (Society Islands). No. 4011. China (Chinkiang).

3. Commercial, No. 4. (1908).—Return showing the countries between which commercial treaties were in force on 1st January, 1908.

4. Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Annual Reports and Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1907.

5. Board of Education.—I.—Statement as to the age at which compulsory education ceases in certain foreign countries and British Colonies. II.—Memorandum on special rating for school purposes in Quebec and Ontario. III.—Regulations for Secondary Schools (in force from 1st August, 1908, in Wales and Monmouthshire).

6. Lunacy (Scotland) Act.—Fiftieth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy.

7. Miscellaneous, No. 4. (1908).—Protocols of the eleven plenary meetings of the second Peace Conference held at the Hague in 1907.

8. Contempts of Courts Bill, 1883.—Copy of a Bill to amend the law as to the contempt of Courts, brought from the House of Lords to the House of Commons, 2nd May, 1883.

9. Sight Tests.—Report on the Sight Tests used in the Mercantile Marine.

10. Treaty Series, No. 14. (1908).—Declaration between the United Kingdom and Paraguay, amending the Treaty of Commerce of 16th October, 1884.

11. Local Government Board (Scotland).—Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board,

12. Mines and Quarries (General Report and Statistics for 1906; Part IV. Colonial and Foreign Statistics).—Statistics relating to persons employed, output, and accidents at mines and quarries in the British Colonies and in Foreign Countries.

13. Colonies (Annual).—No. 559. Swaziland.

14. Vivisection (Royal Commission).—Fifth Report of the Commissioners, with Appendix.

15. Sick and Wounded in War.—Papers relating to the Geneva Convention, 1906.

16. Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland).—Seventh Annual General Report of the Department.

17. Trade.—Annual Statement of the trade of the United Kingdom with foreign countries and British Possessions, 1907.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 679

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India (Press Act).—Full text of Indian Press Act, VII., of 1908 681

Trade with Newfoundland (Board of Trade, Commercial Intelligence Committee).—Report upon the conditions and prospects of British Trade in Newfoundland 681

Judicial Statistics (Ireland) 1907.—Part II., Civil Statistics 681

Army.—Statement showing—Number of Special Reservists recruited during the period 15th January to 16th May, 1908 682

Africa, No. 3 (1908).—Correspondence respecting the taxation of natives and other questions in the Congo State 682

Factory and Workshop (Process of Casting Brass).—Report on the draft regulations proposed to be made for factories in which the process of casting brass is carried on.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 682

Mail Ships Acts, 1891 and 1902.—Rules of Court, dated 3rd June, 1908 ... 682

Criminal Appeal Act, 1907.—(Crown Office Rules, 1906) 682

Merchant Shipping Act, 1906.—Rules of Court for appeals under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, Section 68 682

Supreme Court of Judicature.—Rules of the Supreme Court (June, 1908). 682

Patents and Designs Act, 1907.—Rules of the Supreme Court 682

Diseases of Animals Acts, 1894 to 1903.—Orders defining a foreign animals quarantine station at Irongate Wharf, in the City of London 682

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made by the Board of Trade ... 683

Shop Hours Act, 1904.

(Borough of Batley).—Order made by the Council of the Borough of Batley.

(County of Lancaster).—Order made by the Council of the County of Lancaster.

(City of Worcester).—Order made by the Council of the City of Worcester, and

Order by the Secretary for Scotland, providing for the early closing of certain classes of shops... 683

Polling Districts.

(City of London).—Order made by the Justices of the City of London.

(County of Carnarvon).—Order made by the Council of the County of Carnarvon, and

(County of Salop).—Order made by the Council of the County of Salop with respect to the polling districts 683

Police (Counties and Boroughs, England and Wales).—Reports of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary 683

Merchant Seamen's Fund.—Account of the Receipt and Expenditure under the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act 683

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Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Rules made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland 684

Savings Banks and Friendly Societies.

(Post Office Savings Banks Fund).—Account for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

(Savings Banks Fund).—Account for the year ended 20th November, 1907.

(Friendly Societies Fund).—Account for the year ended 20th November, 1907 684

National School Teachers (Ireland) Pension Fund.—Account of receipts and payments in respect of the capital and income of the above fund, for the year ended 31st December, 1907 684

London County Council.—Returns showing up to 31st March, 1908—The amount of Consolidated Stock, etc. 684

Fines, etc. (Ireland).—Abstract of account of fines accounted for by the registrar of Petty Sessions' Clerks, for the year 1906 684

Dogs Regulation (Ireland) Act, 1865.—Accounts of receipts and expenditure under the Act, for the year 1907 685

Public Records.

(Admiralty Department).—Twelfth Schedule containing a list and particulars of classes of documents which have been deposited in the Public Record Office, but are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation therein.

(Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature (King's Remembrancers and Acknowledgments Department).—Schedule containing list and particulars of classes of documents which are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation in the Public Record Office 685

Post Office.

(Foreign and Colonial Post).—The Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Warrant, 1908, dated 18th May, 1908.

(Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post, Dutch East Indies).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 19) Warrant, 1908, dated 24th May, 1908 685

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Orders in Council, dated 4th June, 1908 685

Loan Societies.—Abstracts of Accounts of loan societies in England and Wales, furnished to the central office for the registry of friendly societies:—For the year ended 31st December, 1905; for the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 686

Port of Arundel.—Account and Report for 1907–1908 686

Medway Conservancy.—Statement of receipts and expenditure by the conservators, for the year ended 25th March, 1908.

Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table... ... 686

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NEW BILL.

Commons Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Earl of Carrington ; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 92) 686

Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.].—Message from the Commons that they concur in the resolution of this House communicated to them on 20th May last, that it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.] be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill [H.L.] are to be referred 686

Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.].—Order of 2nd April last committing the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House discharged 686

Companies (Consolidation) Bill [H.L.]; Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.]; Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.].—Moved, That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the Commons to consider the said Bills (The Lord Granard (*E. Granard*)); agreed to: The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Chancellor.	L. Stanley of Alderley.
E. Halsbury.	L. James.
L. Granard (*E. Granard*).	

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the Commons in the appointment of a Chairman: Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint Five Members of that House to be joined with the said Committee... 687

Companies Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses agreed to.

Preamble:

Lord Hamilton of Dalzell 687

Amendment moved—

"To add, at the end of the Preamble, the words, 'or Protectorates'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Standing Committee negatived. The Report of Amendment to be received to-morrow; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 93.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill.—Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill; Marriages Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed... 688

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill (BY ORDER).—Read a second time; and ordered to be considered on Thursday 688

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Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 688

PETITIONS.

Access to Mountains Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 688

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 688

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 689

Colenso, Francis Ernest.—Petition of Francis Ernest Colenso, for redress of Miss Hariette Emily Colenso's Grievances; to lie upon the Table ... 689

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 689

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 3 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 20 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 689

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 689

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Inquiry into Charities (County of Berks).—Return to be printed. [No. 178] 689

Inquiry into Charities (Administrative County of Devon).—Return to be printed. [No. 179]... 689

Naval and Marine Pay and Pensions Act, 1865.—Orders in Council, to lie upon the Table 689

Army.—Statement showing: (1) Number of Special Reservists recruited, (2) disposal of Militiamen belonging to the disbanded battalions of Militia; (3) number of Special Reservists drilling at the various depots; to lie upon the Table 690

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post).—Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 20) Warrant, 1908; to lie upon the Table 690

Canada.—Report of Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King on his Mission to England in connection with the Immigration of Asiatics into Canada; to lie upon the Table 690

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Loan Societies. —Abstract of Accounts of Loan Societies in England and Wales for the years 1905 and 1906 690

East India (Customs Revenue).—Address for "Return showing the yield of Import Duty on every article taxable under the Indian tariff, so far as the Customs Returns collected in India enable such information to be given ... 690

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Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 180.]

Bill, as amended, re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 264] 725

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table 725

NEW BILL.

Places of Worship (Leasehold Enfranchisement) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 30th June, and to be printed. [Bill 265] ... 725

Old Age Pensions Bill.—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [15th June]. "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was.

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'while it is desirable that the State should organise aid for the unfortunate by establishing and assisting a general system of insurance against the principal risks of life, it is unjust to spend the taxpayers' money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income, and character.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 726
Mr. Burt (Morpeth) 740
Mr. Goulding (Worcester) 744
Mr. Flynn (Cork, N.) 750
Mr. Stuart (Sunderland) 753
Mr. Hodge (Lancashire, Gorton) 756
Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 761
Mr. Horridge (Manchester, E.) 767
Earl Percy (Kensington, S.) 770
Mr. Haworth (Manchester, S.) 776
Sir Brampton Gurdon (Norfolk, W.) 785

Mr. T. R. Bethell (Essex, Maldon) 789
Mr. Henry (Shropshire, Wellington) 793
Captain Clive (Herefordshire, Ross) 794
Mr. W. H. Lever (Cheshire, Wirral) 797
Mr. Rogers (Wiltshire, Devizes) 801
Mr. Barnes (Glasgow, Blackfriars)... 804
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 812
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 823

Question put,.

The House divided :—Ayes, 417 ; Noes 29. (Division List No. 118.)

Main Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

University of Durham Bill.—Read a second time and committed to a Standing Committee 836

Adjourned at eighteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bills have been complied with :—Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1); Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2).

Also the Certificate that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill : Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 837

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified ; and Bill reported from the Select Committee with Amendments 837

North-East London Railway Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed for Tuesday next 837

Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 837

Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill; Lincoln Corporation Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments ; and passed and returned to the Commons 837

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendment proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The report of Amendments to be received to-morrow 837

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendment proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The Report of Amendment to be received to-morrow 837

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow 838

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.—Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 72 and 82 be suspended for the remainder of the session 838

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª and committed.

Moved, "That Standing Orders No. XXXIX. and 102B be considered in order to their being dispensed with."—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee, agreed to. House in Committee accordingly. Bill reported with Amendment. Standing Committee negatived. Bill read 3ª and passed" 838

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Treaty Series No. 15 (1908).—Parcel Post Agreement between the United Kingdom and Panama 839

Canada.—Report of Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King on his mission to England in connection with the Immigration of Asiatics into Canada 839

Mines and Quarries (Accidents at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland).—Report on the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland, on 28th January, 1908.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie upon the Table... ... 839

National Galleries of Scotland Act, 1906.—National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Annuity) Order, 1907; National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Transferred Property) Order, 1908 839

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Ordered by the Secretary for Scotland providing for the early closing of shops in the burgh of Cromarty 839

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post (Egypt)).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 20) Warrant.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act, and ordered to lie upon the Table 839

NEW BILL.

Marriage Act Amendment Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord James; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 100) 839

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter before Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, 17TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Ards and Bangor Railways.—Petition for additional Provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills... 840

June 17.] *Page*

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to:—Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment: Draycott Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill, with Amendments. Amendments to:—Skegness Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [Lords]: Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords]; Great Western Railway Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, Agricultural Holdings Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Wath and Bolton Gas Board [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].

Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [Lords]; Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords],—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 840

PETITIONS.

Access to Mountains Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 842

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 842

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 2 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 28 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 842

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 842

Public Houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 842

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 842

Scottish Land Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 842

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

National Galleries of Scotland Act, 1906.—National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Annuity) Order; to lie upon the Table 842

National Galleries of Scotland Act, 1906.—National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Transferred Property) Order; to lie upon the Table ... 843

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Secretary of Scotland; to lie upon the Table 843

East Indian Products (Foreign Tariffs).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 181] 843

June 17.] *Page*

Mines and Quarries (Accident at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland). Report on the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland, on 28th January, 1908; to lie upon the Table 843

Treaty Series (No. 15, 1908).—Parcel Post Agreement between the United Kingdom and Panama; to lie upon the Table 843

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Range Finders for Scottish Coastguards 843
Appointment for Certified Teachers 844
Hall-marking of French Watch Cases 844
Members of Parliament in Receipt of Colonial Pensions 845
Position of Superseded Transvaal Civil Servants 845
Irish Post Office Stores Contracts 846
Irish Post Office Engineering Services 846
Delay in Appointment of Conciliation Boards for Irish Railways 847
Salaries of Irish Veterinary Department Officials 847
Condition of Roads in Richmond Park 848
Suggested Abolition of the Dublin Branch of H.M. Stationery Office 848
Revenue from Penny Duty on Income Policies 849
Rebates on Sugar Duty 849
Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of James Quilty 850
Evicted Tenants in County Monaghan 850
Pay and Pensions of Foreman in the Army Ordnance Department (Ireland) .. 851
Arming of the Yeomanry 853

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Atlantic Fleet—Battleships under Repair... 853
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Army Boot Contracts in Bristol 856
Bounty Fed Sugar 857
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French Customs Duty on British Imports... 859
Wholesale Tobacco Manufacturers' Licences 860
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Women and Old-age Pensions 861
Reduction of State Liabilities 861
Case of Henry Thomas Storey 862
Salford Docks—Accidents to Workmen 862
Whipping Sentences... 863
Tarbert Pier 863
Central London District Schools 864
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Claremorris District Council Elections 875
Mullingar Labourers' Cottages 876
Proclamation of Sligo and Westmeath 877
Dublin Castle Mail Bags 877
Antrim National Schools 878
Afforestry in Ireland 879
Procedure of the House 880

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table 880

NEW BILLS.

Banks (Unclaimed Balances).

Mr. Bottomley (Hackney, S.) 880

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the disclosure and handling over by Bankers to the Department of the Public Trustee of the amount of dormant balances and securities in their possession and of unpresented old banknotes issued by them."—*(Mr. Bottomley.)*

Sir Henry Kimber (Wandsworth) 883

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 193; Noes, 54 (Division List No. 119.)

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bottomley, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Hart-Davies, Mr. Hugh Lea, Mr. Sloan, Mr. Llewelyn Williams, Mr. Jowett, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Bertram Straus, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Bowerman.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 266.]

Wild Birds.

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 889

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1880 to 1904,"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir Frederick Banbury, Marquess of Hamilton, Lord Edmund Talbot, and Colonel Lockwood.

Bill presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed.—[Bill 267.]

June 17.] *Page*

Business of the House (Old-age Pensions Bill) (Allocation of Time).
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 889

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee Stage, Report Stage, and Third Reading of the Old-age Pensions Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—Five allotted days shall be given to the Committee Stage of the Bill, and: (*a*) The proceedings on Clauses 1 and 2 shall if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 7.30 p.m. on the second allotted day; and (*b*) the proceedings on Clause 3 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the third allotted day; and (*c*) the proceedings on Clauses 4, 5, and 6 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fourth allotted day; and (*d*) the proceedings on the remaining clauses of the Bill and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee Stage to a conclusion shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fifth allotted day and the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put. One allotted day shall be given to the Report Stage of the Bill, and all matters necessary to bring the Report Stage to a conclusion shall be proceeded with, and the proceedings thereon brought to a conclusion, at 10.30 p.m. on that day. One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings of that stage of the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day, or if that day is a Friday at 5 p.m. After this order comes into operation, any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the day; provided that Friday shall not be considered an allotted day except for the purposes of the Third Reading of the Bill. For the purposes of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee Stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking Private Business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to recommit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) Prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) ... 896
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (Liverpool, Scotland) ... 905
Mr. Lambton (Durham, S.E.) ... 907
Mr. Jowett (Bradford, W.) ... 910
Mr. Leif Jones (Westmoreland, Appleby) ... 914
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) ... 917
Sir J. Dickson-Poynder (Wiltshire, Chippenham) ... 919
Sir Francis Powell (Wigan) ... 921
Mr. C. B. Harmsworth (Worcestershire, Droitwich) ... 924
Mr. James Hope (Sheffield, Central) ... 925
Sir Francis Channing (Northamptonshire, E.) ... 928
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 931
Sir John Randles (Cumberland, Cockermouth) ... 939
Mr. Meysey-Thompson (Staffordshire, Handsworth) ... 941
Mr. Staveley-Hill (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) ... 942
Sir F. Banbury, (City of London) ... 943
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) ... 946
Mr. Staveley-Hill ... 949

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out the words 'Committee stage.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. L. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 950
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) ... 951
Mr. James Hope (Sheffield, Central) ... 954

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 251; Noes, 58. (Division List No. 120.)

Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 957
Mr. Bridgeman (Shropshire, Oswestry) ... 962

Amendment proposed—

"In line 3, after the word 'manner,' to insert the words 'It shall be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. A. Henderson, and three other Members of long experience to be chosen by them with the assent of Mr. Speaker, to allot to the remaining stages of the Old-age Pensions Bill, within one week, such periods as they shall think desirable, and, failing any such allotment, the following provisions shall have effect.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) ... 964
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 966
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) ... 968
Mr. Eugene Wason (Clackmannan and Kinross) ... 969
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) ... 970
Mr. Jowett ... 972
Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) ... 975
Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 976

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 4, after the word 'days,' to insert the words 'not being Thursdays.'"—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Harcourt ... 977
Mr. A. J. Balfour ... 977

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Stuart Wortley ... 978

Amendment proposed—

"In line 5, to leave out the words 'Clauses 1 and 2,' and insert the words 'Subsections 1 and 2 of Clause 1.'"—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Harcourt ... 978
Sir F. Banbury ... 978

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 311; Noes, 99. (Division List No. 121.)

Main Question again proposed.

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Mr. CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 308; Noes, 98. (Division List No. 122.)

Question put accordingly.

The House divided:—Ayes, 306; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 123.)

Ordered, That the Committee stage, Report stage, and Third Reading of the Old-age Pensions Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—Five allotted days shall be given to the Committee stage of the Bill, and: (*a*) The proceedings on Clauses 1 and 2 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 7.30 p.m. on the second allotted day; and (*b*) the proceedings on Clause 3 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the third allotted day; and (*c*) the proceedings on Clauses 4, 5, and 6 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fourth allotted day; and (*d*) the proceedings on the remaining clauses of the Bill and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee stage to a conclusion shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion on the fifth allotted day, and the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put. One allotted day shall be given to the Report stage of the Bill, and all matters necessary to bring the Report stage to a conclusion shall be proceeded with, and the proceedings thereon brought to a conclusion, at 10.30 p.m. on that day. One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings on that stage of the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day, or if that day is a Friday at 5 p.m. After this Order comes into operation any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day; provided that Friday shall not be considered an allotted day except for the purposes of the Third Reading of the Bill. For the purposes of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of an Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those Clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking Private Business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business to be taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall:—(*a*) prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1908.

COMMISSION.—The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—
1. Prosecution of Offences (Amendment).
2. Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.), Order Confirmation.
3. Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation.
4. Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1).
5. Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation.
6. Metropolitan Police Provisional Order.
7. Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme).
8. Dublin and South Eastern Railway.
9. City of Glasgow.
10. Huddersfield Water.
11. Derby Gas.
12. Interoceanic Railway of Mexico.
13. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society.
14. Rhymney Railway.
15. Knott End Railway.
16. Dartford Gas.
17. Great Eastern Railway (General Powers).
18. Dundalk Urban District Council.
19. Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours.
20. Argentine North Eastern Railway.
21. Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation).
22. Rochdale Corporation.
23. St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation).
24. Skegness Urban District Council.
25. Cheshire Lines Committee.
26. Llanelly Gas.
27. Great Western Railway.
28. Hull and Barnsley Railway.
29. Hurly's Divorce 993
House adjourned during pleasure.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7); Central Ireland Electric Power; Padiham Urban District Council; Burnley Corporation; Criccieth Water and Improvement.

Also no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills:—Land Drainage Provisional Order; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6); Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 994

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill [H.L.]—A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee 994

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the opposition to the Llandudno Order was withdrawn. The Orders made on 21st May and Tuesday last respecting the commitment of the Bill to a Select Committee so far as relates to the said Order discharged 994

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.]; Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Read 2^a 994

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order) and Bill to be read 3^a on Monday next 994

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Amendment reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3^a on Monday next 994

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons ... 995

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read 2^a (according to order), and committed for Tuesday next 995

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Read 2^a (according to order) 995

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read 2^a (according to order), and committed 995

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill: Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill.—Read 2^a (according to order) 995

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read 2^a (according to order), and committed ... 995

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^a (according to order), and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) deemed to have been reported from the Committee; and to be read 3^a on Tuesday next 995

PETITION.

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill [H.L.].—Petition against; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 995

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Trade Reports (Annual Series.)
No. 4012. Spain (Consular District of Malaga).
No. 4014. China (Amoy).
No. 4019. France (Consular District of Bordeaux).
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 995

Alkali, &c., Works Regulation Act, 1906.—Forty-fourth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works;
Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 996

NEW BILL.

Appellate Jurisdiction Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Chancellor: read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 101) 996

PUBLIC BILLS.—LEGISLATION BY REFERENCE.

The Earl of Camperdown 996

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether means cannot be devised, either in the way of a detailed memorandum or otherwise, for conveying to the House in plain language the effect of proposed legislation when reference is made in Government Bills to Acts and sections of Acts of Parliament without explanation."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

The Chairman of Committees (The Earl of Onslow) 998
The Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) 1000
The Earl of Halsbury 1002
The Earl of Camperdown 1003

Moved, That the debate be adjourned.—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

On Question, debate adjourned *sine die.*

DELAY IN RETRIAL.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1003

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

COMMISSION.—Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went; and, having returned, Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to a number of Acts. (See page 993.)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).—Barry Railway Bill [Lords].
Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 1004

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section B.); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1005

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to: Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill, without Amendment; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill; Lincoln Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

That they have appointed a Committee consisting of five Lords; to join with a Committee of this House to consider the following Bills, viz: —Companies (Consolidation) Bill; Post Office Consolidation Bill; Statute Law Revision Bill; and they request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords 1005

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1005

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1005

Dairies (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table ... 1005

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Education (Provision of Meals) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1005

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table ... 1005

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 3 Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 11 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1005

Lights on Vehicles (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1006

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1006

Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1006

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 1006

Public-houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1006

Rights of Way (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1006

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Alkali, etc., Works Regulation Act, 1906.—Forty-fourth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 182] 1006

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4012, 4014, and 4019; to lie upon the Table 1006

Pensions (Civil List).—Return ordered "of all persons now in receipt of Pensions charged upon the Civil List" 1006

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Lisburn Letter Deliveries 1007
Assault on Long Eaton Postman 1007
United States and Patents Act 1007
Elementary School Age 1008
Case of Mrs. Johanna O'Callaghan... 1008
Ichang Gaol 1008
Cost of Chinese Gaols 1009
Ichang Gaol—Poisoning of Clerks of Works 1009
Phibbs Estate, near Tubbercurry 1010
Cooper Estate, Tubbercurry 1010
Carnalick Evicted Tenant 1011
County Cavan Evicted Tenants 1011
Langley Estate, Longford, Evicted Tenants 1012
Grange Castle Labourer's Cottage Application 1012
Robert Heard's Kilcommon Estate... 1013
Coleraine Rural District Council Solicitor's Costs... 1013
Lisburn Insanitary Dairies 1014

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Navy Clothing Contracts 1015
Delay in Commercial Telegrams at Cork 1015
Non-Crofting Parishes in the Highlands 1016
Medical Officers of Health in the Highlands 1016
Scottish Higher Grades 1017
Westminster Board of Guardians—Dismissal of Assistant Relieving Officer ... 1017
Stow Union Surcharge 1018
Solihull Union—Relief Regulations 1019
Hertfordshire Medical Officer of Health 1020
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Enniskillen Military Stores Escort 1026

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New Cavalry Sword... 1028
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His Majesty's Uniform in Police Courts 1029
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Jamaica and the Panama Canal 1032
Transvaal Gold Mines 1033
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Glasgow Hospitals and the Telephones 1046
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Harvey Estate, Buttevant, Cork 1054
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Status of Government Departments 1059
Natal Indemnity Act 1061
Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill 1061
Scottish Estimates 1061
Licensing Bill 1062
English Land Valuation Bill 1062
Business of the House 1063

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 183.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 183.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 268] 1063

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Married Women's Property Bill.—Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 184.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 184.]

Bill [Not amended] to be taken into consideration upon Tuesday next 1063

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added the following Member to Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Coroners (Ireland) and of the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Bills): Mr. Edward Barry.

Report to lie upon the Table 1064

County Courts Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 269] 1064

NEW BILLS.

Traffic Regulation (Metropolis) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 270] 1064

Bee Pest (Ireland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 271] 1064

DEBATES REPORTS.—Ordered, That Mr. Charles Allen, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Cleland, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Pike Pease, Mr. John Robertson, Mr. Toulmin, and Mr. Walrond, be Members of the Select Committee.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*) ... 1064

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,005,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Grants, Pay, Allowances, Training, and Miscellaneous Charges of the Territorial Force (not exceeding 312,000 men), Imperial Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and Channel Islands and Colonial Militia, including the Permanent Staff, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

Mr. Arthur Lee (*Hampshire, Fareham*) 1065
The Secretary of State for War (*Mr. Haldane, Haddington*) 1074
Mr. Arnold-Forster (*Croydon*) 1085
Sir Charles W. Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 1093
Mr. Ashley (*Lancashire, Blackpool*) 1097
Mr. Belloc (*Salford, S.*) 1105
Captain Faber (*Hampshire, Andover*) 1108
Mr. Smeaton (*Stirlingshire*) 1109
Mr. Eugene Wason (*Clackmannan and Kinross*) 1111
The Financial Secretary to the War Office (*Mr. Acland, Yorkshire, Richmond*) 1112

Mr. James Hope, (Sheffield, Central) 1120
Mr. McCrae (Edinburgh, E.) 1122
Viscount Valentia (Oxford) 1126

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

Tyne Improvement Bill (BY ORDER).—As amended, considered.

Mr. Herbert Craig (Tynemouth) 1127
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) 1130

Amendment proposed to the Bill—

"In page 3, line 12, to leave out the words 'works as may hereafter,' and insert the words 'or remedial works as shall'"—(*Mr. Herbert Craig*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Mr. Luke White (East Yorkshire, Buckrose) 1132
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1137
Mr. Fenwick (Northumberland, Wansbeck) 1140
Mr. Hudson (Newcastle-on-Tyne) 1143
Sir J. Brunner (Cheshire, Northwich) 1143
Mr. Curran (Durham, Jarrow) 1144
The President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Churchill, Dundee) 1145
Mr. J. Johnson (Gateshead) 1150

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments (in accordance with the statement of the President of the Board of Trade) made to the Bill.

Bill to be read the third time.

SUPPLY (ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,005,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Grants, Pay, Allowances, Training, and Miscellaneous Charges of the Territorial Force (not exceeding 312,000 men), Imperial Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and Channel Islands and Colonial Militia, including the Permanent Staff, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909," resumed.

[Mr. EMMOTT, (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Question again proposed.

Mr. Seddon (Lancashire, Newton) 1151
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 1154
Mr. Wyndham (Dover) 1155
Mr. Hunt (Shropshire, Ludlow) 1159

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Calendar Reform Bill.—Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn. 1169

Port of London Bill.—Ordered, That the Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, praying to be represented by Council before the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill, be referred to that Committee.—(*Sir Henry Kimber.*) 1160

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 19TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London United Tramways Bill as amended, to be considered upon Monday next 1161

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table... 1161

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1161

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1161

Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1161

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 10 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

London Paving Expenses Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1161

Metropolitan Sewers and Drains Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1161

Port of London Bill.—Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 1162

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Exports and Imports (United Kingdom).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 185] 1162

Colonial Reports (Miscellaneous).—Report No. 52 (Native Education in South Africa); Part III., Education in the Protectorates, by E. B. Sargant, Education Adviser to the High Commissioner for South Africa; to lie upon the Table 1162

Colonial Reports (Annual).—Report No. 560 (St. Helena, Report for 1907); to lie upon the Table 1162

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4016 to 4018; to lie upon the Table 1162

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Treasury Agreements for Construction of Works... 1162
New Scheme for Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes 1163
Irish National Teachers—Supplementary Estimate 1163
Promotion of School Teachers in Co. Down 1164
Restoration of John M'Quade, Evicted Tenant 1165
Grogey (Co. Fermanagh) Election Arrangements... 1165

Deduction of Interest from Payment to Mr. Robert Pearson 1166

Royal Irish Constabulary 1167

Erection of School at Tullywisher 1167

Application for Labourers' Cottages at Hillborough 1168

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table 1168

Public Offices Sites (Extension) (Re-committed) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1169
The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 1170
Sir F. Banbury 1171
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) 1172
Mr. Harcourt 1173
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 1174
Sir F. Banbury 1174
Mr. Harcourt 1174

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

Mr. Harcourt 1174

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3.

Sir F. Banbury 1175
Mr. Harcourt 1176

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, 6, and 7, added to the Bill.

Clause 8.

Sir F. Banbury 1175
Mr. Harcourt 1176

Clause agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Sir F. Banbury 1177

Amendment proposed.

"In page 1, line 6, after the word 'Board,' to insert the words 'and of the owners and ratepayers of their district expressed by Resolution passed in manner provided by the Third Schedule of the Public Health Act, 1875.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

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Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.) ... 1178

Colonel Lockwood (Essex, Epping) ... 1180

Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) ... 1181

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir F. Banbury ... 1183

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 6, after the word 'Board' to insert the words 'and of the owners and ratepayers of a parish expressed by resolution passed in manner provided by the Third Schedule of the Public Health Act, 1875.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Masterman ... 1183

Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) ... 1184

Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 1185

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 23 ; Noes, 125. (Division List No. 124.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

Mr. Ashley ... 1187

Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) ... 1187

Mr. Masterman ... 1188

Mr. Staveley Hill (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) ... 1188

Sir F. Banbury ... 1189

Mr. MASTERMAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 142 ; Noes, 23. (Division List No. 125.)

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

The House divided :—Ayes, 153 ; Noes, 20. (Division List No. 127.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

Friendly Societies Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Sir F. Banbury ... 1125

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report progress and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Earl Winterton ... 1196

Mr. Akers Douglas (Kent, St. Augustine's) ... 1197

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.) ... 1197

Sir F. Banbury ... 1198

Question put.

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 25 ; Noes, 154. (Division List No. 127.)

Clause 1.

Mr Staveley-Hill ... 1201
Mr. Hobhouse ... 1201

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2:

Mr. Hobhouse ... 1201

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 17, to insert the words, 'Where the rules of a Registered Friendly Society or Branch in force at the commencement of this Act provides for the admission as members of persons from the minimum age authorised by the principal Act, the rules shall be construed as providing for the admission as members of persons from birth.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Lord Balcarres ... 1203
Mr. Shackleton (Lancashire, Clitheroe) ... 1204
Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) ... 1205
Earl Winterton ... 1206
Sir F. Banbury ... 1206
Mr. John O'Connor (Kildare, N.) ... 1208
Mr. John Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) ... 1209
Mr. Guinness (Bury St. Edmunds) ... 1211

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr. Staveley-Hill ... 1212
Mr. Hobhouse ... 1212
Lord R. Cecil ... 1212

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7.

Mr. Hobhouse ... 1213

Amendments proposed—

In page 2, line 23, to insert the words 'Subsection 3 of"

"In page 2, line 25, to leave out the word 'subsection,' and to insert the word 'proviso.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Amendments agreed to.

Mr. Hobhouse ... 1213

Amendment proposed.

"In page 2, line 25, to leave out subsection (6), and insert 'Provided that where, on such a complaint against a person of withholding or misapplying property, or applying it for unauthorised purposes, it is not proved that that person has acted with any fraudulent intent, he may be ordered to deliver up all such property or to repay any sums of money applied improperly, but shall not be liable to be imprisoned under this section in default of such delivery, or to payment of any fine.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Mr. Staveley-Hill 1215
Mr. Stuart-Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 1215
Mr. John Ward. 1215

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

New clause—

"In Section 41 of the principal Act 'three hundred pounds' shall be substituted for 'two hundred pounds,' and 'fifty-two pounds' for 'fifty pounds,' as the maximum amount a member or person claiming through a member of a registered friendly society or branch is entitled to receive by way of gross sum and by way of annuity respectively."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Brought up, and read a first and second time, and added to the Bill.

Mr. Hobhouse 1217

New clause—

"To Section 56 of the principal Act which relates to nominations, the following Subsection shall be added: (6) A nomination or variation or revocation of a nomination in writing, signed by a member of a branch, and delivered at or sent to the registered office of the branch of which he is a member, or made in a book kept at that office, shall be effectual, although the money to which the nomination relates or some part thereof may not be payable by that branch, but is payable by the society or some other branch thereof."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Brought up and read a first and second time, and added to the Bill.

Earl Winterton 1218

New clause—

"At the end of Subsection 1 of Section 35 of the principal Act shall be added the words 'and if, in consequence of the non-payment of the money or non-delivery of the money or non-delivery of the property to such trustees, they shall take proceedings in a court of law to enforce payment or delivery as aforesaid, they shall be entitled by a live preference in receipt of their taxed costs relative to such proceedings as is given them by this section with regard to money or property in such possession as aforesaid.'"—(*Earl Winterton.*)

Brought up and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. Hobhouse 1219

Question put, and agreed to, and clause added to the Bill.

Bill reported; as amended to be considered on Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 272.]

Patents and Designs Bill [LORDS].—Order for Second Reading read.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (Mr. Kearley, Devonport) 1219

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

ADJOURNMENT.—Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes after Four o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, 22ND JUNE, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS have not been complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the following Bill:—Ards and Bangor Railway.

The same was ordered to lie upon the Table 1221

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Commons Amendment to Lords' Amendments considered, and agreed to 1221

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee with Amendments 1221

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1221

Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill; Order for the Second Reading on Wednesday next discharged; Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with... 1221

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1221

Tyne Improvement Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners 1221

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell (for the Lord Herschell) (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1^a, and to be printed. [No. 102] 1221

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1222

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.] (**Bridgwater Order**); Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] (Potteries, etc. Order); Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.] (Sevenoaks and Stourbridge Water Orders); Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.] (No. 1 Order).—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Ribblesdale; and that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to 1222

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Ribblesdale; and that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to 1222

NEWRY, KEADY AND TYNAN RAILWAY.—PETITION FOR BILL.

The Earl of Mayo 1222

Moved, "That the Report of the Standing Orders Committee made on 20th May last, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Petition for a Bill by the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway Company ought not to be dispensed with, and which was read and agreed to by this House on that date be further considered, and the Report and the Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders in respect of the said Petition be referred back to the Standing Orders Committee for further consideration and report."—(*The Earl of Mayo.*)

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Onslow*) 1224
The Earl of Camperdown 1226
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1227
The Earl of Laudersdale 1228
Lord Zouche of Harynguorth 1228
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1228

On Question, Motion negatived.

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Transvaal.—Statement of mortality amongst the different classes of coloured labour in the Transvaal mines, from January 1906, to February, 1908, inclusive... 1229

Colonies.

(Annual.)—No. 560. St. Helena: Report for 1907.

(Miscellaneous.)—No. 52. Report on Native Education in South Africa. Part III. Education in the Protectorates, by E. B. Sargant, Education Adviser to the High Commissioner for South Africa 1229

Trade Reports: Annual Series.—Nos. 4000, 4003, 4016–4026 1229

Metropolitan Police (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commission upon the duties of the Metropolitan Police, together with Appendices (Volume I.) 1229

Government Laboratory.—Report of the Principal Chemist upon the work of the Government Laboratory.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1229

India (Loans raised in India).—Return of all Loans raised in India chargeable on the Revenues of India 1230

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Post, except Parcels).—The Foreign and Colonial Post Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1230

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. [No. 103] 1230

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª, and to be printed. [No. 104] 1230

Companies Bill [H.L.].—Amendment reported (according to order). A further Amendment made; Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow; and to be printed as amended. [No. 106] 1230

Land Values (Scotland) Bill.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1230
The Earl of Crewe 1231
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1232

Standing Orders of the House.—Order of the day read for the consideration of the Report from the Select Committee.

The Earl of Crewe 1233

Moved, "That the Report be agreed to."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to; and the following Rules made Standing Orders of the House: "Every Motion, after it has been moved, shall be proposed from the Woolsack or the Chair before debate thereon. Debate must be relevant to the Question before the House, and where more than one Question has been put the debate must be relevant to the last Question so proposed until it has been disposed of. An Amendment to a Question must not be inconsistent with a previous decision on the same Question given on the same Bill at the same stage."

Lord Burghclere 1237

Moved, "That the following additional Rule be also made a Standing Order, viz:—(4) It shall be the duty of the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman to point out to the House or to the Committee, as the case may be, any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."—(*Lord Burghclere.*)

Lord Newton 1242
The Lord Chancellor (Lord Loreburn) 1246
Lord Ribblesdale 1248
The Duke of Northumberland 1249
Lord Belper 1250

Amendment moved—

"That the following Rule be made a Standing Order, viz.: 'It shall be the duty of the Lord Chairman to point out to the Committee any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so.'"—(*Lord Belper.*)

The Earl of Onslow 1251
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1253
The Earl of Crewe 1255
The Earl of Halsbury 1256
The Duke of Northumberland 1257

On Question, "That the following Rule be made a Standing Order, viz.:—"It shall be the duty of the Lord Chairman when the House is in Committee to point out to the Committee any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 15; Not Contents, 55.

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EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1259
Lord Hindlip 1262
The Earl of Mayo 1262
The Earl of Crewe... 1263
The Marquess of Salisbury... 1264

Assizes and Quarter Sessions Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Lord Alverstone 1265

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 4, after the word 'person' to insert the words 'who would have been' and after the word 'trial' to insert the words 'at any such assizes or quarter sessions.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Lord Alverstone 1265

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 7, to leave out from the word 'trial' to the end of line 11, and to insert the words 'and his Majesty may by Order in Council make such provisions as to the jurisdiction of the court, and the attendance, jurisdiction, authority, and duty of sheriffs, gaolers, officers, jurors, and persons, the use of any prison, the removal of prisoners, the alterations of any commissions, writs, precepts, indictments, recognisances, proceedings, and documents, the transmission of recognisances, inquisitions, and documents, and the expenses of prosecutors and witnesses, and of maintaining and removing prisoners, as seem necessary or expedient to carry into effect this provision.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.
Lord Alverstone 1266

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 11, at the end of the line to insert the words 'but (*a*) the costs and expenses of any prosecutors and witnesses shall be paid by the council of the county or borough who would have been liable to pay those costs and expenses if the person had been committed for trial in the ordinary course; and (*b*) the council of the county or borough who would have paid the costs of the trial of the person if he had been committed in the ordinary course shall pay to the council of the county or borough by whom the costs of the assizes or quarter sessions to which he is committed under this provision are paid such sum, on account of his trial, as may be agreed upon between the councils, or in default of agreement, determined by the Secretary of State.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

Lord Clifford of Chudleigh... 1266

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord Alverstone 1267

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 16, after the word 'circumstances,' to insert the following new subsection: (4) Any warrant for arresting or detaining any person, and any recognisance to appear and give evidence, or to appear for trial, issued or taken in the case of a person charged with murder or manslaughter on a coroners inquisition, shall, if the trial of the person charged cannot take place in the ordinary course owing to assizes to which the warrant or recognisances relate not being held, by virtue of the provisions of this Act, continue in operation until the next assizes, or, if the person charged is committed to any other assizes by justices, such other assizes.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2.

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 2, to insert the following new clause: 'A court of quarter sessions for a county, or the justices of the county assembled at special meeting (which special meeting they are hereby authorised to hold) may at any time when it appears desirable, for any purpose, fix or alter the time for holding the next court of quarter sessions, so that the sessions be held not earlier than fourteen days before, nor later than fourteen days after, the week in which they would otherwise be held.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Title amended, and Bill recommitted to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. [No. 105.]

House adjourned at ten minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 22ND JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH)—Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords]; Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time... 1268

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).—Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 1268

Lincoln Corporation Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 1268

Tyne Improvement Bill (KING'S CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Bill read the third time, and passed 1268

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Cardiff Railway Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1268

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time... 1269

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time, and committed 1269

Widnes Corporation Bill (BY ORDER).—Read the third time, and passed ... 1269

Tawe Valley Gas Bill [Lords] (changed from "Swansea Valley Gas Bill [Lords]") (by Order).—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 1269

London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [LORDS] (BY ORDER).—Read a second time, and committed 1269

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill.—Read a second time; and ordered to be considered upon Wednesday 1269

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill (BY ORDER).—Considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday 1269

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords]. 1269

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [LORDS.].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 273] 1269

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition for alteration: to lie upon the Table 1269

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1270

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1270

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 5 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1270

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1270

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Metropolitan Police (Royal Commission).—Report of the Royal Commission upon the Duties of the Metropolitan Police; to lie upon the Table ... 1270

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4000, 4003, and 4021–4026; to lie upon the Table 1270

Post Office (Foreign and Colonial Post).—Foreign and Colonial Post Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908; to lie upon the Table 1270

Civil Services, 1908–1909 (Superannuation and Retired Allowances).—Appendix to the Estimate for Civil Services, Class 6, Vote 1, containing a list of Supperannuation and Retired Allowances payable on 30th November, 1907; to lie upon the Table 1270

Government Laboratory. Report of the Principal Chemist upon the work of the Government Laboratory; to lie upon the Table 1271

Civil Services (Supplementary Estimate, 1908–1909).—Estimate presented, of the Further Amount required in the year ending 31st March, 1909, for Public Education (Ireland); referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 186]... 1271

Civil Service Estimates, 1908–1909.—Revised Estimate, Class 7, Vote 4 (Ireland Development Grant); referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 187] 1271

East India (Loans raised in India).—Return of all Loans raised in India, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ending on 31st March, 1908, etc.; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 188] 1271

Transvaal.—Statement of Mortality amongst the different classes of Coloured Labour in the Transvaal Mines from January, 1906, to February, 1908, inclusive; to lie upon the Table 1271

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Copy ordered, "of Comparative Statement showing (*a*) The amounts at present received by the Secondary Education Committee Districts from the sums which, under Clause 13 of the Education (Scotland) Bill, will constitute the Education (Scotland) Fund; (*b*) the distribution of the balance of the Fund, under Clause 14 (2) of the Bill, by two different methods."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 189] 1271

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

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Combatant Commissions 1272
Staffs of Osborne and Devonport Colleges 1272
Assistant Inspectorships of Postmen at Glasgow 1272
Weekly Half-holiday at Sub-Post Offices in Co. Fermanagh 1273
Recruiting Pamphlets in House of Commons Post Office 1273
Motor Cab Regulations 1274
Promotion of a Coffee Trust 1275
Publication of Annual Report of Inspector of Factories 1276
Death from Industrial Disease at Burslem 1276
Accommodation for Staff at Billingsgate Post Office 1276
Potato Blight in Ireland 1277
Purchase of Estate of J. T. Power, at Ballingeary 1278
New Irish Universities Senates—Representation of Primary Schools 1279
Irish Outrages and Cattle-driving 1280
Extra Police in Irish Disturbed Districts 1281
Dublin Metropolitan Police Inquiry 1282
Firing of Heavy Guns at Arbroath 1283
Australian Contribution to Navy 1284
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Armoured Vessels—Protection against Torpedoes 1285
Yeomanry Re-enlistment for One Year 1285
Yeomanry Training 1285
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Vaccination of Territorial Force 1286
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Definition of non-fatal Accidents to Railway Servants 1290
Suicide of a Trimmer on the S.S. "Ornba" 1291
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The Scottish Estimates—The Barra Cottars 1338

NEW BILLS.

Milk Control (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday, 14th July, and to be printed. [Bill 274] 1336

Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 275] 1340

Selection (Standing Committees).—Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table 1340

Business of the House (Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill).—Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 294 ; Noes 96. (Division List No. 128.) ... 1340

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Order for the Second Reading read.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.*) 1343

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. J. F. Mason (*Windsor*) 1362
Mr. Lambton (*Durham, S.E.*) 1371

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the question to add the words 'upon this day three months.'"—(*Mr. J. F. Mason.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Russell Rea (*Gloucester*) 1376
Mr. E. Edwards (*Hanley*) 1389
Mr. Lyttleton (*St. George's, Hanover Square*) 1394
Mr. Ridsdale (*Brighton*) 1403
Mr. Laurence Hardy (*Kent, Ashford*) 1410
Mr. William Abraham (*Glamorgan, Rhondda*) 1417
Mr. Gibbs (*Bristol, W.*) 1422
Mr. Brace (*Glamorgan, S.*) 1424
Mr. Baldwin (*Worcestershire, Bewdley*) 1433
Mr. Walsh (*Lancashire, Ince*) 1438
Mr. Lupton (*Lincolnshire, Sleaford*) 1445

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

Mr. Arthur Henderson (*Durham, Barnard Castle*) 1454
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.*) 1456

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 290 ; Noes, 145. (Division List No. 129.)

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 23RD JUNE, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stockport Corporation Bill.—The King's Consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1461

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 1461

Seaham Harbour Dock Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill.—Reported, with an Amendment 1461

North-East London Railway Bill; Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill; Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, without Amendment 1461

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Southwell District Gas Bill; Bromley and Crays Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 1461

Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill.—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments 1461

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House To-morrow 1461

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill.—Committed 1461

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1461

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Committed... 1462

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 1462

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Committed 1462

Lincoln Corporation Bill; North-Eastern Railway Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to 1462

London and District Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit tomorrow till two o'clock 1462

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1462

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1462

Paisley District Tramway Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.]—Read 2ª (according to order) and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) deemed to have been reported from the Committee; and to be read 3ª on Thursday next 1462

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed 1462

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Board of Education (1908).—Code of Regulations for public elementary schools in England 1462

Irish Land Commission.—Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1462

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—No. 4027 to 4030.
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1463

Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Rules and programmes of examinations for 1909 1463

County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877.—Account of receipts and payments under the Act during the year ended 31st March, 1908... ... 1463

Finance Accounts.—Finance accounts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the financial year ended 21st March, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1463

NEW BILLS.

Nurses Registration Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday, 6th July next. [No. 107] 1463

Matrimonial Causes Bill [H.L.].—Presented; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Wednesday, 22nd July next. [No. 108] 1463

Weekly Rest-Day Bill [H.L.] [SECOND READING].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Viscount Hill 1463

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Viscount Hill.*)

Earl Beauchamp 1468
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1470
Lord Heneage 1471
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1473

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

NEWS IN WAR TIME.

Lord Ellenborough 1474
The Earl of Granard 1477
The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1478
Earl Cawdor 1479

Companies Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons 1480

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 23RD JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London United Tramways Bill (by Order).—As amended, considered; a Clause added; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time ... 1480

Audenshaw Urban District Council Bill [Lords] (by Order).—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time 1480

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to: Amendment to Amendments to Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [Lords] 1480

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 276] 1481

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 277] 1481

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [Lords.].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Biils. ... 1481

Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords].—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1481

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1481

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1481

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table... 1481

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1482

Licensing Bill.—5 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 14 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1482

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1482

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Rules and Programme of Examinations for 1909; to lie upon the Table 1482

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4027 to 4030; to lie upon the Table 1482

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County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877.—Account presented, of the Receipts and Payments under the Act during the year ended 31st March, 1908; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 191] 1482

Finance Accounts.—Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom for the year ended 31st March, 1908; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 192] 1482

National Galleries of Scotland Act, 1906.—First Report by the Board of Trustees for the National Galleries of Scotland for the period from 1st April, 1907 to 31st December, 1907; to lie upon the Table 1483

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889 (Ordinance).—University Court Ordinance No. XXVI. (Glasgow, No. 7) (Regulations for Higher Degrees in Arts and Science); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 193] ... 1483

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889 (Ordinance).—University Court Ordinance, No. XXVII. (Glasgow, No. 8) (Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships); to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 194] 1483

Members of Parliament.—Address for "Return of the names of every Member returned to serve in each Parliament from the dissolution of Parliament in the year 1900 to the present date" 1483

Constabulary (Ireland) [Pay, etc.]—Committee to consider of making further provision for the Pay of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and for the Pensions, Pension Allowances, and Gratuities payable to them, their widows and children (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*) 1483

Civil Services, 1908–9 (Superannuation and Retired Allowances).—Paper to be printed. [No. 190] 1483

Board of Education.—Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools in England; to lie upon the Table 1483

Irish Land Commission.—Return of Advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of July, 1907; to lie upon the Table ... 1484

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Removal of Human Remains from Prince's Square Burial Ground 1486
Punishment for Homicide in America 1486
Applications from Surveyors for Head Postmasterships... 1487
Staff at Osborne and Dartmouth Naval Colleges 1487
Sentence on William Purdue, of Bedford 1488
Securities and Money in the Court of Chancery 1489
Unclaimed Government Stock and Dividends 1490
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Irish Proclaimed Counties ... 1526

Kenmare Estate, Kerry ... 1527

Collsmann Estate, Kerry ... 1528

The Union Jack at Westminster ... 1528

Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) Repeal Bill.—Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 195.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 195.]

Bill [not amended] to be taken into consideration upon Thursday ... 1529

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table ... 1529

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES) (CHAIRMAN'S PANEL).—Mr. STUART-WORTLEY reported from the Chairman's Panel.

Report to lie upon the Table ... 1530

NEW BILL.

Shop Clubs Act (1902) Amendment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 278] ... 1530

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—John James Oddy, esquire, for the County of York, Eastern Part of the West Riding, Pudsey Division ... 1530

Old-Age Pensions Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.

Clause 1:

Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 1530

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 5, at the beginning, to insert the words, 'There shall be paid to.'"—*(Lord R. Cecil.)*

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 1532

Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) ... 1533

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 1533

Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) ... 1534

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 55; Noes, 293. (Division List No. 130.)
Sir F. Banbury 1540

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after the word 'fulfilled,' to insert the words 'and who is not subject to the disqualifications mentioned in this Act.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1541

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Bowles... 1541

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after the word 'shall,' to insert the words 'until Parliament otherwise determines.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1544
Mr. Walter Long 1545
Mr. Herbert (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) 1546
Sir F. Banbury 1547
Lord R. Cecil 1548
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1549
Mr. Verney (Buckinghamshire, N.) 1551
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 1551
Viscount Helmsley (Yorkshire, N.R. Thirsk) 1551
Mr. Courtney Warner (Staffordshire, Lichfield) 1552
Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 1552
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1553
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1555
Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon) 1557
Sir F. Banbury 1557
Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) 1557
Mr. Jesse Collings (Birmingham, Bordesley) 1557

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 103; Noes, 341. (Division List No. 131.)
Sir F. Banbury 1563

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out the words 'under this Act.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

The Attorney General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1563
Mr. Walter Long 1563
Lord R. Cecil 1564

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 1564

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, lines 8 and 9, to leave out the words 'so long as those conditions continue to be fulfilled and.'"—(*Sir Henry Craik.*)

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Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Sir W. Robson 1565
Sir F. Banbury 1566
Mr. Goulding (Worcester) 1566

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. Bowles 1566

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'he,' to insert the words 'remains in the United Kingdom and.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1567
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1567
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 1568
Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) 1568
Mr. Lloyd-George 1568
Mr. A. J. Balfour 1568
Sir F. Cawley (Lancashire, Prestwich) 1570
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 1570
Mr. Mildmay (Devonshire, Totnes) 1571
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 1571
Sir F. Banbury 1572
Mr. Bowles 1572
Mr. Harold Cox 1573
Sir W. Robson 1573
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1573
Mr. Lloyd-George 1574
Mr. Clavell Salter (Hampshire, Basingstoke) 1574
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 1574
Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University) 1575
Mr. Luttrell (Devonshire, Tavistock) 1576
Lord R. Cecil 1576
Mr. Walter Long 1577
Mr. Lloyd-George 1578
Mr. Joynson Hicks (Manchester, N.W.) 1579

Question put.

The Committee divided: Ayes, 101; Noes, 376. (Division List No. 132.)

Sir Walter Foster (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) 1585

Amendment proposed.—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'be at the rate of,' and to insert the words 'not exceed.'"—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'be' stand part of the clause."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1586
Mr. Walter Long 1586

Amendment negatived.

Viscount Castlereagh 1587

Amendment proposed.

"In page 1, lines 11 and 12, to leave out the words 'at the rate of five shillings a week,' and insert the words 'paid at the rates set forth in the schedule to this Act.'"—(*Viscount Castlereagh*).

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause,"

Mr. John Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) ... 1587
Mr. Goulding ... 1588
Mr. Whitehead (Essex, S.E.) ... 1590
Mr. Chiozza-Money (Paddington, N.) ... 1592
Mr. Gooch (Bath) ... 1593
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) ... 1593
Mr. Maddison (Burnley) ... 1595
Mr. Rendall (Gloucestershire, Thornbury) ... 1597
Mr. Rowlands (Kent, Dartford) ... 1598
The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) ... 1599
Mr. Verney (Buckinghamshire, N.) ... 1601
Mr. Ellis Davies (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) ... 1604
Lord R. Cecil ... 1605
Mr. Holt (Northumberland, Hexham) ... 1607
Lord Balcarres ... 1608
Mr. Tomkinson, (Cheshire, Crewe) ... 1611
Mr. Leif Jones (Westmoreland, Appleby) ... 1611
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1612
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1615

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out the words 'of five shillings a week,' and insert the words 'set forth in the schedule to this Act.'"—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 118; Noes, 334. (Division List No. 133.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"After the word 'in,' to insert the words 'Part I. of.'"—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1625
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1625
Mr. Walter Long ... 1626
Lord R. Cecil ... 1627
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1627
Mr. Laurence Hardy (Kent, Ashford) ... 1628
Mr. John Ward ... 1628
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1629
Mr. Lambton (Durham, S.E.) ... 1630
Mr. Cave (Surrey, Kingston) ... 1630
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1631
Mr. James Hope ... 1631
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1631
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1631
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 1632

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

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Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 339; Noes, 108. (Division List No. 134.)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put accordingly and agreed to.

Mr. Asquith claimed, "That the Main Question be now put.'

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

And it being after Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

Blackburn Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered.

Mr. Harmood-Banner (Liverpool, Everton) 1637
Mr. Scott (Ashton-under-Lyne) 1638

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out subsection 3."—(*Mr. Harmood-Banner.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Mr. Helme (Lancashire, Lancaster) 1639
The Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Emmott, Oldham) 1640
Lord Balcarres 1640
Mr. Whitbread (Huntingdonshire, Huntingdon) 1641
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.) 1642
Viscount Morpeth (Birmingham, S.) 1643
Mr. Adkins (Lancashire, Middleton) 1644

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read the third time.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS, WEDNESDAY, 24th JUNE, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with:—Widnes Corporation.
The same was ordered to lie on the Table 1645

Margate Corporation Bill.—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The Orders made on 20th May last and the 16th instant discharged, and Bill committed ... 1645

West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The Orders made on 18th May last and the 16th instant discharged. Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with 1645

Manchester Corporation Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—Reports from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table 1645

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Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendments proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The report of the Amendments to be received To-morrow 1645

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Viscount Halifax: "That it be an instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council Order."

Lord Heneage 1646
Viscount Halifax 1646
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*Earl of Crewe*) 1651

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the County Borough of Swansea (Orders Nos. 1 and 2).

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Colonies (Annual).—No. 561. Ceylon 1654

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—No. 4032–4042 1654

National Galleries of Scotland Act, 1906.—First Report by the Board of Trustees for the National Galleries of Scotland.
Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1655

Greenwich Hospital and Travers' Foundation.—Statement of the estimated income and expenditure of Greenwich Hospital and of Travers' Foundation, for the year 1908–1909 1655

Motor Car Acts, 1896 and 1903.—Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland prohibiting the driving of motor cars on the road in County Dublin from Malahide to the Velvet Strand... 1655

Penal Servitude Acts, 1853–1891 (Conditional Licence) 1655

Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899.—Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under Section 2 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, stating: That the provisions of the Greenock Corporation Order are of such a character that they ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order. That, having regard to Section 16 (2) of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, the provisions of Clauses 52 and 54 of the Perth Corporation Order ought not to be dealt with by Provisional Order under that Act. That, save as aforesaid, the several Draft Provisional Orders be allowed to proceed subject to such recommendations as they may hereafter make with respect to the several Orders.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie upon the Table 1655

Universities (Scotland) Act, 1889 (University Court Ordinances).

No. 26. (Glasgow, No. 7).—Regulations for Higher Degrees in Arts and Science.

No. 27. (Glasgow, No. 8).—Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. [No. 109] 1655

Standing Orders of the House.—Ordered that the Rules made Standing Orders of the House on Monday last be entered on the Roll of Standing Orders, and be printed. [No. 110.

LOCAL TAXATION.

The Earl of Onslow 1655

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Papers respecting the additional duties imposed by Parliament during recent years upon local authorities and to the increased burdens thereby thrown upon urban and rural rates and upon the members and officials of county and other councils."—(*The Earl of Onslow*).

Lord Allendale 1667
Viscount St. Aldwyn 1670
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) .. 1676
Lord Balfour of Burleigh 1682
The Marquess of Huntly 1689

Moved, "That the Debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Denman*).

On Question, debate adjourned till To-morrow.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 24TH JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Draycott Gas Bill (BY ORDER).—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 1691

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill (BY ORDER).—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1691

Barry Railway Bill [LORDS] (BY ORDER).—Read a second time and committed 1691

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1691

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Friday 1691

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to: Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Companies Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [Lords] 1691

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and ordered, under Section 9 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 279] 1692

PETITIONS.

Daylight Saving Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1692

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1692

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Greenwich Hospital and Travers' Foundation.—Statement of the estimated Income and Expenditure of Greenwich Hospital and of Travers' Foundation for the year 1908-9; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 197] 1692

Colonial Reports (**Annual**).—Colonial Report, No. 561 (Ceylon, Annual Report for 1907) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table 1692

East India (Contagious Diseases).—Address for Return 1693

Penal Servitude Acts (**Conditional Licence**).—Copy presented, of Licence; to lie upon the Table 1693

Railways Abandonment.—Report by the Board of Trade respecting the Macclesfield and District Tramways Bill; referred to the Committee on the Bill 1693

Motor Car Acts.—Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland prohibiting Motor Car traffic on a highway in County Dublin; to lie upon the Table 1694

Trade Reports (**Annual Series**).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4032 to 4042; to lie upon the Table 1694

Private Legislation Procedure (**Scotland**) **Act, 1899**.—Copy presented, of Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, that they are of opinion that the Greenock Corporation Order ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order, and that Clauses 52 and 54 of the Perth Corporation Order ought not to be dealt with by Provisional Order [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 196] 1694

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Friendly Societies and Insurable Interests 1694

Sales of Estates in County Cork 1696

Scottish Town Councillor's and Interest in Contracts 1699

Purchase of Untenanted Land at Rathkenny 1699

Dublin Metropolitan Police Inquiry 1700

Dublin Metropolitan Police Annual Reports 1700

Enclosure of Redenham Common, Hants 1701

Testing of Railway Weighing Machines 1701

Civil Servants and Political Clubs 1701

Accidents caused by Tramcars 1702

Pay of Officers of the Public Works and Forest Departments in India ... 1702

Memorial by Mr. C. W. Allan, Conservator of Forests 1703

Evicted Tenants—Case of James Murphy, of Croughteeri 1703

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Evicted Tenants—Case of Michael Ambrose, of Ardagh ... 1704
Reinstatement of John O'Neill, of Rockhill ... 1704
Land Act, 1903 (Section 2)—Application of Mrs. O'Callaghan, of Downes ... 1704
Evicted Tenants—Application of James Barry, of Gerat... ... 1705
Irish Education—Interpretation of Rule 128(d) ... 1705
Application for Land of James Kavanagh, of Ballinakill... ... 1706

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Sailors Unclaimed Pay and Effects... ... 1706
Naval Pensions ... 1707
Soldiers' Pensions ... 1707
The New Bayonet ... 1708
Curragh Camp ... 1708
Birmingham Small Arms Company Contract ... 1709
Indian Public Works Department ... 1709
Indian Punitive Police ... 1709
Alcoholic Imports into West Africa ... 1710
Dinizulu ... 1711
Martial Law in Natal—Indemnity Bill ... 1712
Native Labour on the Rand—Heavy Mortality ... 1713
The Lunacy Act ... 1716
Open-air Meetings ... 1717
Lead Miners ... 1717
Comparative Prices of British and German Flour ... 1718
Penmachno School Site ... 1719
Teachers and Vaccination ... 1720
New Barnet Postal Service... ... 1720
Penny Postage to the United States ... 1721
Unpaid Money Orders ... 1721
Waste Paper as an Aid to Fraud ... 1722
Underground Telegraph Wires to the North ... 1722
Postmen's Bank Holiday Pay ... 1722
An Omission from the Hansard Index ... 1723
Irish Education Grant ... 1723
Bank of England—Unclaimed Stock ... 1725
County Council Register of Voters... ... 1726
New Scottish Fishery Cruisers ... 1726
Kilfinane Cattle-Drive Prosecution ... 1726
Kilrush Land Appeals ... 1728
Vandeleur Estate Evicted Tenant 1728
Colonel Gascoigne's Kilfinane Estate ... 1729
Judge Curran on Cattle Driving ... 1729
Longford Evicted Tenants 1730

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Armstrong Estate, Longford ... 1730

Irish Industrial School Regulations ... 1731

Royal University of Ireland ... 1731

Irish Education Grant ... 1733

Nymphsfield Postal Service ... 1733

Legislation by Reference ... 1734

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments ... 1734

Procedure of Old-age Pensions Bill ... 1734

Business of the House ... 1735

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Report to lie upon the Table ... 1735

DEBATES REPORTS. —Ordered, "That Mr. Harold Cox be discharged from the Select Committee on Debates Reports."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Theodore Taylor be added to the Committee."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Mr. Patrick O'Brien (Kilkenny) ... 1736
Mr. William Redmond (Clare, E.) ... 1736

Question put, and agreed to.

Old-age Pensions Bill.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Mr. Laurence Hardy (Kent, Ashford) ... 1737

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, after the word 'week,' to insert the words 'except when a person qualified to receive a pension under this Act, is in receipt of any parochial or other relief, in which case the pension shall only be such amount, as with the amount received in relief, makes up the rate described in Part 1 of the Schedule.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.) ... 1739
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) ... 1740
Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) ... 1741
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 1741

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir F. Banbury ... 1741

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, at end, to insert the words 'or such other less sum as a local pension committee shall determine.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) ... 1742
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) ... 1743

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Mr. Jesse Collings (*Birmingham, Bordesley*) ... 1744
Mr. Rawlinson (*Cambridge University*) ... 1745
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestershire, E.*) ... 1745
Mr. Bowles (*Lambeth, Norwood*) ... 1746
Mr. G. D. Faber (*York*) ... 1747
Viscount Morpeth (*Birmingham, S.*) ... 1747
Sir Walter Foster (*Derbyshire, Ilkeston*) ... 1748
Mr. Harold Cox (*Preston*) ... 1749
Sir F. Banbury ... 1750

Question put, and negatived.

Lord R. Cecil ... 1750

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, after the words 'last inserted,' to insert the words 'Provided always that the sum shall be in the prescribed proportion to the contribution made by the pensioner as provided in regulations to be made by the Treasury.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1758
Mr. Chaplin (*Surrey, Wimbledon*) ... 1761

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 323; Noes, 104. (Division List No. 135.)

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 86; Noes, 346. (Division List No. 136).

Mr. Barnes (*Glasgow, Blackfriars*) ... 1775

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, to leave out lines 13 to 16 inclusive."—(*Mr. Barnes.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'any,' in line 13, stand part of the clause."

Mr. McKenna ... 1779
Mr. Walter Long ... 1782
Mr. Dickinson (*St. Pancras, N.*) ... 1785
Mr. Mildmay (*Devonshire, Totnes*) ... 1787
Mr. J. W. Wilson (*Worcestershire, N.*) ... 1789
Mr. Lloyd-George ... 1789
Mr. Austen Chamberlain ... 1791
Lord R. Cecil ... 1793
Mr. Rees (*Montgomery Boroughs*) ... 1793

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the CHAIRMAN proceeded, pursuant to the Order of the House of 17th June, to put forthwith the Question on the Amendment already proposed from the Chair.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'any,' in line 13, stand part of the clause," put, and negatived.

Remaining words to the end of line 16 omitted.

The CHAIRMAN then proceeded successively to put forthwith the Questions necessary under the Order of the House of 17th June to dispose of the business to be concluded at half-past Seven of the Clock this day.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Amendment—

"In page 2, line 4, to leave out subsection (2),"—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*)—made.

Question put, "That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 341; Noes, 124. (Division List No. 137.)

Clause 3:

Mr. Courthope (*Sussex, Rye*) 1799

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, lines 7 and 8, to leave out the words 'be disqualified for receiving or continuing to.'"—(*Mr. Courthope.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

Sir W. Robson 1800

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lord R. Cecil 1800

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 8, after the word 'receive,' to insert the words 'the full amount of.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1802
Mr. Lyttelton (*St. George's, Hanover Square*) 1805
Mr. Bowles 1805
Mr. Dickinson 1807
Mr. R. Duncan (*Lanarkshire, Govan*) 1807
Mr. James Campbell (*Dublin University*) 1808
Mr. Stanley Wilson (*Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness*) 1810
Lord R. Cecil 1811

Amendment negatived.

Mr. Dickinson 1812

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, after '(a),' to insert the words 'Until Parliament otherwise determines.'"—(*Mr. Dickinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Sir W. Robson 1814
Mr. James Campbell 1815
Sir F. Banbury 1816
Mr. Timothy Davies (*Fulham*) 1817
Sir Charles W. Dilke (*Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean*) 1818
Lord Balcarres 1819
Mr. Jesse Collings 1820
Mr. G. D. Faber 1821

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir Walter Foster (*Derbyshire, Ilkeston*) 1822

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Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, to leave out subsection (a), and to insert the words '(a) If he has at any time since the first day of January, nineteen hundred and four, received, or hereafter receives, any parochial or other relief which disqualifies for registration as a parliamentary elector."—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Mr. Lloyd-George 1824
Mr. Jesse Collings 1825
Mr. Soares 1825
Mr. Walter Long 1827
The First Commissioner of Works (*Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale*) 1830
Mr. Bridgeman (*Shropshire, Oswestry*) 1830
Sir Brampton Gurdon (*Norfolk, N.*) 1832
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lanarkshire, N.W.*) 1832
Sir Walter Nugent (*Westmeath, S.*) 1833
Mr. Walter Long 1833

Amendment negatived.

Sir F. Banbury 1834

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, to leave out the words 'any such.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'any' stand part of the clause."

Mr. Harcourt 1835
Sir F. Banbury 1836

Amendment negatived.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

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VOLUME CXC.

ERRATA.

June 3. Mr. Villier's Speech.

Col. 66, line 54, *for* "50,000," *read* "500,000."

VOLUME CLXXXIX.

June 2. Page 1815.

Speech attributed to Mr. Goulding should be attributed to Mr. Staveley-Hill.

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

EIGHTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 3rd June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

New Writ for the County of York (Pudsey Division), in the room of the Right Hon. George Whiteley (Manor of Northstead).—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS (STANDING ORDER 62 COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, Standing Order 62 has been complied with, viz.:—Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill (changed from "Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power (re-committed) Bill").—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

London County Council (Money) Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Tawe Valley Gas Bill [Lords] (changed from "Swansea Valley Gas Bill [Lords]")—As amended, to be considered upon Monday, 15th June.

Private Bills, etc.—Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 128, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, also for depositing at the Private Bill Office all Documents relating to any Order under

The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Not amended, considered; to be read the third time To-morrow.

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill; Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Durham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Birmingham, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Barnsley (three); Bodenham; Sheffield (two); Sudbury; and Walthamstow; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Burnham; Deptford (two); Desford; Devonport; Goodwick; Harrogate; Hebden Bridge; Ilford; Ledbury; Mexboro; and Norwich; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Leith, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANDISE MARKS (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Birmingham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of Commissioners of Sewers from Gravesend Bridge to Sheerness, against alterations, praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE DISPUTES BILL.

Petition from Birmingham, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the Borough of Batley, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, altering the Hours of Closing for certain classes of shops within the Borough [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CONTEMPTS OF COURT BILL [LORDS] 1883.

Copy presented, of Bill, intituled an Act to amend the Law as to Contempts of Court, brought from the House of Lords to the House of Commons, 2nd May, 1883 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DOGS REGULATION (IRELAND) ACT, 1865.

Account presented, of the Receipts and Expenditure under the Act for the year 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 162.]

FINES, ETC. (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Abstract of Accounts and Fines accounted for by the Registrar of Petty Sessions Clerks for 1906 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 163.]

LUNACY (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Fiftieth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

Copy presented, of Returns relating to the Council up to 31st March, 1908, with Estimate of Expenditure for the year ending 31st March, 1909 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 164.]

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Statement as to the Age at which Compulsory Education ceases in certain Foreign Countries and British Colonies [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Warrant, 1908, dated 18th May, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

HAGUE CONFERENCE (MISCELLANEOUS No. 4, 1908).

Copy presented, of Protocols of the eleven Plenary Meetings of the Second Peace Conference held at the Hague in 1907. With the Annexes to the Protocols [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Public Records (Supreme Court of Judicature).—Copy of Schedule containing a List and Particulars of Classes of Documents existing or accruing in the King's Remembrancer's and Acknowledgments Department of the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature which are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation in the Public Record Office [by Act].

Public Records (Admiralty Department).—Copy of Twelfth Schedule containing a List and Particulars of Classes of Documents which have been removed from the Department of the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and deposited in the Public Record Office, but are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation therein [by Act].

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Scheme to be proposed by the Scottish Education Department, under Section 14 (2) of the Bill, for the allocation of the balance of the Education (Scotland) Fund to the several districts, for which a Committee on Secondary Education was appointed by the Minister of the Department dated the 10th day of June, 1897."—(*Mr Sinclair.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 165.]

SPEECHES (TIME LIMITS) (COLONIAL AND FOREIGN LEGISLATURES).

Address for "Return of the principles and methods, if any, adopted for limiting the length of Speeches in the Supreme Legislative Assemblies of British self-governing Possessions, of the United States, and of the following European Countries: France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Belgium, and Switzerland."—(*Mr. Dundas White.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Proceedings at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff.

Mr. THOMAS RICHARDS (Monmouthshire, W.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been called to the character of the proceedings at the Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, on Monday last, 25th May; and whether he intends to take proceedings under the Corrupt Practices Act or otherwise.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson.*) I have no knowledge of what passed at the Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, on the occasion in question; but if the hon. Member will kindly supply me with particulars I will see whether I am able to deal with the matter.

Feeding of the Crew of the Steamer "Portsmouth."

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the complaint of the men of the steamer "Portsmouth," now at the Port of Belfast; whether he is aware that the men allege that the beef supplied was unfit for human consumption, and that one barrel of beef had to be thrown overboard; whether he is also aware that the men allege that they have been short of provisions, although the vessel has only been three and a half months on her present voyage, that they allege they have been short of fish, and although the new Board of Trade scale provides that they are to have salt pork the men have had none during the present voyage; and whether he can state if the provisions of the "Portsmouth" were inspected prior to the commencement of the voyage.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Yes, Sir, the attention of the Board of Trade has been called to the complaints referred to by my hon. friend; and I may point out that it is open to the seamen aggrieved to institute legal proceedings for compensation under the Merchant Shipping Acts if they see fit to do so. So far as I have been able to ascertain, the provisions of the "Portsmouth" were not inspected when the voyage commenced.

Land Tenure and Taxation in Northern Nigeria.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what the terms of reference are of the Committee which is sitting to consider the system of land tenure and taxation in Northern Nigeria; whether they are calling evidence which will be on record; and whether, if the terms of reference extend only to Northern Nigeria, he will enlarge them so as to embrace all the West Coast Colonies.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The terms of reference are:—To consider the evidence collected by Sir P. Girouard, and any other epidence available, as to the existing system of land tenure in Northern Nigeria, and to report; (1) On the system which it is advisable to adopt; and (2) as to the legislative and administrative measures necessitated by its adoption. The evidence considered by the Committee will be on record. It is considered preferable to deal with Northern Nigeria separately, and the question whether the policy which may be adopted in that Protectorate can be followed elsewhere in the West African Colonies is one for future consideration.

Unemployment in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. WEDGWOOD: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Report of the Commission on Unemployment in the Transvaal mines, which recommended the taxation of unworked mineral rights, has yet been received in the country; and whether he will obtain this Report and lay it upon the Table of this House.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The Indigency Commission Report has not yet been received, but the Governor's attention shall again be called to the matter.

Supply of Official Forms to Scottish Sheriffs, &c.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether all orders under statutory authority creating offences in Scotland are supplied by the Stationery Office to Sheriffs, Sheriff-Substitutes, and Procurator-Fiscals; and, if not, will he give instructions that this necessary information is supplied.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) All "Acts of Sederunt" of the Court of Session, Edinburgh, which are printed in the series of Statutory Rules and Orders, are sent, as published, to fifty-eight sheriff clerks and sheriff clerks depute, in accordance with a distribution list received in February, 1896, from the Crown Office, Edinburgh. No such distribution is made by the Stationery Office to Procurator-Fiscals. The Sheriff and Sheriff-Substitutes and Procurator-Fiscals are supplied under the promulgation list with copies of the Statutes. I am not aware that I have any power to give such instructions as my hon. friend suggests, but I will inquire.

Supply of Stationery for use of County Court Judges.

MR. C. E. PRICE: To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Stationery Office supplies stationery for the use of County Court Judges in England; and whether similar stationery is supplied to Sheriffs, Sheriff-Substitutes, and Procurator-Fiscals in Scotland; and, if not, whether he will see this is done in Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The County Court Judges are supplied with stationery by the Stationery Office through their registrars. Except in the cases of the

Procurator-Fiscals of Edinburgh, Lanark, and Kincardine, to whom supplies of stationery are made within certain annual limits, the Stationery Office does not supply Sheriffs, Sheriff-Substitutes, and Procurator-Fiscals, whose salaries are inclusive of office expenses (Civil Service Estimates, 1908–9, p. 291.) Indictments are printed at the cost of the Stationery Office, except in cases where typewriters have been supplied.

Advertising of Sales of Admiralty Stores.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if he will state in what newspapers in Great Britain and Ireland the last sale by auction of obsolete ships, steam tenders and surplus stores was advertised.

(*Answered by Mr. Lambert.*) The list was a comprehensive one, including thirty-three newspapers in the case of the sale of ships and fifteen in the case of the sale of stores.

Insurance of Teachers under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

MR. BARRIE: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Treasury has now authorised the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland to effect insurances of teachers under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Answer is in the negative.

MR. BARRIE: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the cost of insurance of teachers in primary schools in England under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, is paid out of State funds.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) No, Sir; no portion of the cost of compensating or insuring teachers under The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, is payable from State funds.

Irish Evicted Tenants.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the number of tenants evicted, according to the official returns, in the county of Mayo since 1879; how many applications the Estates Commissioners have received for reinstatement; ; and how many evicted tenants have been reinstated up to date in the county by the Estates Commissioners under the voluntary provisions of the Purchase Act of 1903 and under the compulsory powers of the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) According to Parliamentary Return No. 125, of 1903, 886 tenants were evicted in County Mayo during the preceding twenty-five years who had not been reinstated in their holdings. Eighty-two tenants have been evicted in the county during the years 1903–7. The Estates Commissioners have received applications for reinstatement in the county from 544 persons. Seven of the applicants have been reinstated on estates sold direct by the landlord under the Act of 1903, and five on lands purchased by the Commissioners under that Act. One hundred and six applicants are considered suitable to be provided with holdings, and their cases will be considered in connection with the allotment of any untenanted land which the Commissioners may acquire. Three hundred and twenty-five applications have been refused, and the remaining 101 applications, which have been recently received will be considered in due course. Up to the present the Commissioners have not acquired any land in County Mayo under the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907. The majority of sales in that county are being effected through the Congested Districts Board.

Reinstatement of Widow Sammon of Carrowkennedy.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord- Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have yet taken any effective steps for the reinstatement of Widow Sammon, whose eviction from a small mountain holding at Carrowkennedy, County Mayo, was the cause of the foundation of the United Irish League in 1898.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application of Mrs. Bridget Sammon, and have decided that she is a suitable person to receive a holding in the event of one becoming available. The opportunity of providing her with a holding has not yet arisen.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the amount of rent for which Widow Sammon was evicted; and what has been the cost of maintenance of a special police barrack for the past nine years on the evicted farm.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Mrs. Sammon was evicted for non-payment of rent amounting to £14 14s. The cost of the police station at Carrowkennedy since its establishment in March, 1901, has been somewhat over £2,000, but it would be a mistake to assume that this cost has been incurred in protecting the tenant of the evicted farm. When the necessity arose for having police at Carrowkennedy, the neighbouring police station at Erriff Bridge was abolished, and the police were removed to a new station at Carrowkennedy, which is more centrally situated in the district to be policed.

Mr. WILLIAM O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the late Marquess of Sligo, on whose estate the eviction of Widow Sammon took place, offered that portion of his estate for purchase to the Congested Districts Board so long as ago as 1898; whether the Congested Districts Board agreed with Lord Sligo to purchase at eighteen years purchase, and that the negotiations were only broken off on the question of the price to be paid for a royalty on the collection of seaweed; if so, what was the amount in dispute on which the bargain was broken off; how much the tenants have since had to pay, which they would have been saved if the purchase had been completed; and how does the question of purchase now stand on Lord Sligo's estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) In 1897 the late Marquess of Sligo offered for sale to the Congested Districts Board a portion of his property in Murrisk Barony, including the holding of Mrs. Sammon. The property offered comprised 619 tenancies at a rental of £3,883, two agistment lettings the valuation of which was £110, and a seaweed royalty of £230. The Board endeavoured to induce the owner to sell certain grass lands for the enlargement of the small holdings, but he declined to do so. After prolonged negotiations the price eventually asked by Lord Sligo was eighteen years purchase of the gross revenue to be paid in cash. This price, at the then value of land stock, would have represented about twenty years purchase of the rental of the agricultural holdings. The Board declined to purchase, not because of any question as to the seaweed royalty, but because the price was considered excessive and because no grass lands were to be sold for the enlargement of the holdings. Subsequently, in October, 1901, the Board made a renewed offer for the property, which they estimated would involve a loss on resale of about £11,000, but the owner refused the offer. The amount in dispute when the negotiations were broken off was about £9,000. Again in October, 1903, after the passing of the Act of that year, the Board repeated their previous offer, the addition to which of the bonus then payable would have brought up the amount receivable by the vendor to the cash payment previously demanded by him. This offer was also declined. The Board have no information as to the amounts which the tenants have since had to pay, and therefore cannot say how much they would have saved if the purchase had completed.

Claims of Irish National School Teachers.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is in a position to make any statement as to the probable date of the introduction of the promised legislation dealing with the claims of the Irish national school teachers; and whether he will consider the advisability of making provision for payment to teachers in receipt of disablement pensions of an allowance amounting to two-thirds of their salaries.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that legislation is necessary or has been promised in this matter. A supplementary estimate making provision for increasing the salaries of the teachers is in course of preparation and will be laid before Parliament as soon as possible, but I cannot at present name a date. As regards teachers' pensions, I can only refer to the Answer which was given by the Secretary to the Treasury to the Question of the hon. Member for South Kilkenny on 27th February last.

Defalcations in the Accounts of the Cyprus Post Office.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will furnish full particulars of the defalcations recently discovered in the Cyprus accounts by the Assistant-Comptroller and Auditor during his tour abroad; and will he say what punishment was inflicted on those who were found guilty in connection with these defalcations.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The defalcations to which the hon. Member refers were, as a matter of fact, discovered by the local auditor of Cyprus at his test audit for the year ending 31st March, 1907, and reported by him on the 2nd May, 1907. The discovery of the defalcations has led to a complete overhauling of the Post Office accounts. The total amount of defalcation, originally thought to be less than £1,500, has now been found to be £1,915 4s. 6¾d. The first embezzlement occurred in October, 1905, and the remaining frauds occurred between June, 1906, and April, 1907. The two accounting clerks in the Larnaca Post Office were arrested and committed for trial before the Supreme Court of Cyprus on charges of larceny and falsification of accounts. The senior accountant was convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, the other man was acquitted. The second of these officers was then brought before the Executive Council on a charge of gross carelessness in the discharge of his duties, and was suspended after trial by the Council. After very full examination of all the evidence the Secretary of State has now confirmed the suspension. The island postmaster has been required, as the officer responsible for the general management of the Post Office, to refund £600, which is nearly one-third of the entire defalcations.

Pensions of Colonial Audit Branch Officers.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the number of old Colonial Audit Branch men serving abroad in the various Crown Colonies and Protectorates who retired between 1889 and 1906, and the age, length of service, amount of gratuity or pension, and the cause of retirement of each.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) There were two such cases—

	Age.	Length of service.	Amount of Pension.	Cause of retirement.
1	40	11½ years	£139 2s. 6d.	Ill-health
2	33	8½ ,,	£88 15s. 0d.	Ill-health

Position of Colonial Auditors.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the name, date of appointment to the public service, initial salary and date of appointment to the Colonial Audit Branch, date of return to Colonial Audit Branch in London, and salary immediately preceding and immediately succeeding such date, of each local auditor and assistant auditor in the Crown Colonies and Protectorates who returned from abroad for service in the Colonial Audit Branch in London between 1889 and 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Colonial Audit Branch was not a branch of the Government service in the period referred to.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the recent absorption of the Colonial Audit Branch by the Exchequer and Audit Department, he will state the number of local auditors and assistant auditors now serving abroad who have intimated their acceptance of the terms of entry into the newly-constituted Department, the station at which each is now serving; and whether each of such stations is officially considered to have a healthy or an unhealthy climate.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Eight local auditors and assistant auditors have accepted the terms of entry. The stations at which they are serving are; East Africa, 2; Uganda, 1; Nyassaland, 1; Northern Nigeria, 2; Southern Nigeria, 1; and Gold Coast, 1; all of which are officially classed as unhealthy. One local auditor and five assistant auditors were serving at headquarters at the date of the amalgamation, and therefore came under the new scheme before receiving Colonial appointment. These are all, with one exception, serving at unhealthy stations. Five local auditors and two assistant auditors have declined the new conditions. Four local auditors and six assistant auditors have not yet replied.

Bolton Brewing Statistics.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, in reference to the Return of Brewers' Licences presented 4th February, if he can state what districts are included for collection under the heading Bolton; and how much of the 22,223 lbs. of hop substitutes put down under this heading was actually used for brewing in the borough of Bolton itself.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Excise districts comprised in Bolton collection are Bolton, Blackburn (two districts), Burnley, and Bury. I am unable to answer the second part of the Question.

Appointment of New Furniture Clerk at Dublin Board of Works.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will inquire from the Board of Works, Dublin, the cause of the delay in filling the post vacated by the late furniture clerk, and, considering that this is an appointment where the candidate has to be nominated by the Board, can he say when the vacancy is likely to be filled; and, in view of the fact that the present assistant furniture clerk has had many years' service during which he has won the esteem and respect of all officials of high standing in various Government Departments in Ireland for his courtesy and ability, will he state what action the Board propose to take with reference to this gentleman's claim for the position, seeing that he has been performing the duties of furniture clerk and assistant furniture clerk in a satisfactory manner for nine months without any extra remuneration.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The appointment of furniture clerk has already been made. The successful candidate was selected on 27th February last, and took up duty on 25th May, the delay being due to the fact that in the interval he had to undergo an examination by the Civil Service Commissioners.

Government Printing Contracts and the Fair Wages Resolution.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that certain of the existing contracts for the printing work of various Government Departments are held by contractors who decline to recognise the agreements governing rates of wages, working hours, overtime rates, and general conditions, as mutually agreed upon between and signed by the representatives of employers and employed, and which are generally recognised as governing the conditions of labour in the printing trade; and whether, in the allocation of printing contracts in the future, he will consider the propriety of giving preference to contractors who do recognise and observe such agreements, thereby giving effect to the spirit and intention of the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons of 13th February, 1891.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Every contractor is bound by the conditions of his contract to conform to the Resolution of 13th February, 1891. If the hon. Member knows of any case in which the terms of the Resolution are not observed, I shall be glad to have it investigated and to see that remedy is applied where necessary.

Bicycle Rates on Railways.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the pledges given by the Government, he can now undertake that the Railway Conference will, before it concludes its labours, consider evidence from the Cyclists' Touring Club and other cyclists' organisations with regard to the conveyance of passengers' bicycles on railways, in order that a complete general agreement may be arrived at between the companies and the general public.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I do not know what pledges are referred to, and as at present informed and advised I can add nothing to the reply given to the hon. Member's previous Question on the subject.

Suez Canal Traffic.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state what was the total shipping in tonnage passed through the Suez Canal in each of the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, and what proportion was British; what was the total sum of dues levied by the Suez Canal Company in each of those years, and what were the amounts of the dues levied on British shipping in the same years; can he state what was the postal subsidy paid to the Peninsular and Oriental Company; and what were the Suez Canal dues paid by that company in each of those years.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The figures as to tonnage and total receipts are as follows —

	1905.	1906.	1907.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Total net tonnage of vessels of all nationalities passing through the Suez Canal -	13,134,105	13,445,504	14,728,434
Net tonnage of British vessels passing through the Suez Canal - - - - -	8,356,940	8,299,931	9,495,868
Percentage of British net tonnage - - - - -	63·6	61·7	64·5
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
Total receipts from transit dues	113,866,796	108,161,896	116,000,096

No statement of the receipts from transit dues on British ships is published, but it is probable that the proportion of these receipts to the total receipts is similar to the percentage of British net tonnage to the total net tonnage. With regard to the last part of the Question, the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company inform me that the amount of Suez Canal transit dues paid by them was as follows: Year ending 30th September 1905, £321,274 4s.; 1906, £330,000 4s. 2d.; 1907, £333,000 17s. 5d.; total £984,275 5s. 7d. The company add that the net amount of postal subsidy payable under the East India, China, and Australian contract for the three years was £997,158 4s.

Telegraphists on Sorting Duties in Bristol Post Office.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the postmaster at Bristol has placed a number of telegraphists on sorting duties on the ground that the average number of messages per operator is insufficient, and that, in order to avoid telegraphic delay, unqualified learners have been forced to deal with public work; and whether the Postmaster-General will direct that, in view of the need of accuracy in telegrams, unskilled learners shall not be employed on this work.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) In order to relieve the postal staff at Bristol from performing an excessive amount of overtime, arrangements were made for transferring several telegraphists temporarily to the sorting office, their work in the instrument room being undertaken, when sudden pressure subsequently arose, by three female learners who were employed for a maximum of three hours a day to do operating work. The learners in question were fully qualified to perform the work entrusted to them.

Delay in Erection of Post Office at Athy.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether negotiations for the purchase of the site of a new Post Office in Athy are completed; and can he say what is the cause of delay in the erection of the building.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The negotiations for the purchase are in progress, but cannot be completed until certain requisitions on the title have been answered. In the meanwhile, work on the building cannot of course be put in hand.

Damage to Devonshire Roads by Traction Engines carrying Telegraph Cables.

MR. WALROND (Devonshire, Tiverton): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that during the recent laying of postal telegraph wires in Devonshire damage has been caused to the high roads by the constant passage of heavy traction engines carrying drums, etc., whether he can give an assurance that it is not necessary to re-open any of the trenches owing to defective or incomplete wiring; and if, in view of the expense incurred by local authorities, he can make a grant towards meeting the charges which must otherwise fall upon the rates.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I understand that some injury has been done to certain high roads in Devonshire by the passage of traction engines conveying telegraph cable, and the local authorities, in some cases at any rate, are in communication with the contractors who consigned the cable. It will not be necessary to re-open the trenches, though it may be necessary from time to time to inspect the joint boxes. The Postmaster-General would pay for such reinstatement of the road as is necessitated by the actual laying of telegraph cable, but would not make good injury caused by the traffic of engines conveying cable on a high road.

Classification of Postmen's Offices.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is now in a position to fix a date for the publication of the final circular classifying postmen's offices under the Departmental interpretation of the Hobhouse Committee's Report; and whether the House will have an opportunity of reading the circular mentioned before the discussion of the Postal Estimates.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am not yet in a position to say when the final circular will be issued, but every effort is being made to expedite the announcement. The circular will be issued before the Post Office Estimates are taken.

Pay of Andover Postmen.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the postmen of the town of Andover will benefit as regards rates of pay under the new classification; and, if so, from what date and to what extent.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Andover is still in suspense. The new classification will date from 1st January, 1908.

Damage by Trawlers to Deep Sea Cables off the Irish Coast.

MR. OWEN PHILIPPS (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he has received any complaint from the Commercial Cable Company with reference to the alleged damage by trawlers to the deep-sea cable off the Irish coast, and if where the alleged damage occurred the depth of the sea is over 300 fathoms; and whether it is possible for even the largest and most modern trawlers from Milford Haven or elsewhere to trawl at this depth.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Commercial Cable Company have not communicated with us on the matter to which my hon. friend refers, nor are we aware of the exact depth of the sea where the damage to cables has been done. We have reason to believe that trawl warps are now made of such length that trawling is not impossible at a depth of 300 fathoms, but the information at present available goes to show that in point of fact it has not been carried out at such a depth.

Schools in Single School Parishes.

LORD ROBERT CECIL (Marylebone, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Education what is the total of each of the different classes of school in the single-school parishes enumerated in the recent Return.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I beg to refer the noble Lord to the Answer which I gave on 18th May, of which I will send him a copy.

Belfast Income-Tax Assessments—Depreciation of Plant.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that dissatisfaction exists amongst manufacturers in Belfast and the North of Ireland with regard to the present method of arranging allowances for the depreciation of machinery and plant in connection with income-tax assessments, the abatements, in the majority of cases, being insufficient to meet the actual depreciation, and allowances in the same trade varying to the extent of 12½ per cent.; whether, in consequence of this, some local firms are mulcted to the extent of from £400 to £1,000 a year more than similar firms in England; and whether he will consider the advisability of differentiating between different classes of machinery and of granting such abatements as will be sufficient to meet actual depreciation of plant and machinery.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am not aware that exceptional dissatisfaction exists in Belfast and the North of Ireland, as is suggested by the hon. Member's Question. If any manufacturer considers he has not been allowed a sufficient amount for depreciation he should give proper notice of appeal to the special commissioners, who carefully consider each case upon its merits and have full power to grant any rate of allowance which the circumstances may require.

Reduction of the Capital Liabilities of the State.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to the £41,000,000 by which it is estimated the capital liabilities of the State will have been reduced in the three years ending 31st March next, what are the estimated total Exchequer issues in respect to this amount of debt, and how much of these issues is due to realised surpluses not provided for in the Budget.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The sum of £40,802,000 is the estimated net reduction in the aggregate capital liabilities of the State in the three years after allowing for the creation of new capital liabilities during that period to the extent of £11,334,000. The estimated gross reduction in the amount of the aggregate capital liabilities is thus £52,136,000. The total amount of cash which has been applied, or remains to be applied, to effect that reduction is estimated at £50,302,000. Practically the whole of that total is issued, or will be issued, from the Exchequer, either as a direct charge upon the Consolidated Fund or as a charge upon the Votes. The only exceptions are some small items of receipt which reach the National Debt Commissioners without passing through the Exchequer, and some which are appropriated in aid of Votes. For the three years these exceptional items amount to about £500,000. Of the total of £50,302,000, the portion which represents realised surpluses not provided for in the Budget is £12,891,000.

Rathmines Urban Council and Article 27 of Public Bodies Order.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the clerk to the Rathmines Urban Council or the auditor of the Local Government Board or the Local Government Board itself have cited any legal authority in support of their contention that the taxing master's certificate relieves the clerk to the said council from carrying out Article 27; if so, by what means can ratepayers exercise supervision over the expenditure on Parliamentary proceedings by the said council of moneys raised by the rates; and can the Local Government Board compel the clerk of the council to carry out its orders by *mandamus* or otherwise.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are not aware of any legal decision upon the point raised in the first part of the Question. It is, as I informed the hon. Member on 20th May, open to any person interested, if so advised, to take proceedings by mandamus to compel compliance with the provisions of Article 27 of the Public Bodies Order. In the opinion of the Local Government Board there would have been legal difficulties in the way of their proceeding by mandamus or otherwise in this case.

Sunday Drunkenness Return.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say when the Sunday Drunkenness Return, granted some time ago, will be laid upon the Table.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I laid the Return in question on the Table some time ago, and I understand that copies will be available in the course of a day or two.

Sale of Estate with a Single Tenant.

Mr. HUGH BARRIE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have made it a rule, in cases where an agreement has been entered into between a landlord and his only tenant for the sale to the tenant of his holding under The Land Purchase (Ireland) Act, 1903, to refuse to declare such lands an estate within the meaning of that Act; and, if not, will he state the reasons why the Estates Commissioners refused to declare the lands of Claghan, Limavady, County Londonderry, an estate, which William Long, as landlord, has agreed to sell to John Smyth, the tenant, under the provisions of that Act, and thus excluding from the benefit of that Act the tenant who holds these lands from the landlord from 10th February, 1867, under a lease for a term of twenty-one years and who has had two fair rents fixed thereon; whether he is aware that the Estates Commissioners, in the year 1905, provisionally declared the said lands an estate within the meaning of the Act, and two years afterwards, when considerable expense had been incurred in proving the title to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, they then refused to declare the lands an estate and would give no reason for such ruling; and whether the Estates Commissioners will reconsider their ruling regarding this estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have not made any such rule as is suggested in the first part of the Question. It is entirely within the Commissioners' discertion to decide what lands they may declare to be fit to be regarded as a separate estate for the purposes of the Irish Land Act, 1903, and it would be contrary to their practice to state the reasons which actuate them in the exercise of their discretion in particular cases. The Commissioners are not prepared to re-consider their ruling in the case referred to in the Question, but such ruling does not prevent the owner from selling the holding under the Land Purchase Acts otherwise than as an estate under the Act of 1903.

Macroom Improvement Scheme.

Mr. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain the delay in transmitting to the Macroom Rural District Council the report of the inspector on the recent inquiry into an improvement scheme under the Labourers Act in that district.

(*Answerd by Mr. Birrell.*) The inspector's order in this case was signed on 26th May, and copies thereof were despatched to the council on 30th May, as soon as they were received from the printer. The scheme was a very large one, embracing 383 cottages and 93 additional plots for cottages already built, and the fact is that there has been great expedition rather than delay in the case.

Government Aided Railway Construction in Ireland.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the amount of free grant given for the construction of the railway to Clifden in Connemara, and the amount for the railway to Achill Island, County Mayo; what are the terms on which the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland work those lines; are there any other railways in Ireland which have been built or assisted to be built by Government grant; and, if so, what are the names of them, and the amounts given in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The particulars of the Government grants given in the case of the two railways in question and of other similar railways will be found in Statement No. VI., p. 474, of the Appendix to the First Report of the Viceregal Commission on Irish Railways (Cd. 3633, of 1907). The agreements for the working of the two lines by the Midland Great Western Railway Company are scheduled respectively to the Galway to Clifden Railway Order, 1890 (*Dublin Gazette,* 2nd December, 1890), and the Achill Extension Railway Order, 1894 (*Dublin Gazette,* 27th July, 1894). Statement No. V. in the Appendix first quoted gives the names of the railways which have been assisted by a Government undertaking to contribute, if necessary, a maximum sum of 2 per cent. per annum on the capitals of the undertakings.

Surveyors for Engineer Services.

Mr. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether the details of the scheme effecting the staff of surveyors for engineer services have been settled, as was anticipated would be done in March last; and, if so, what is the reason why such scheme has not yet been promulgated, and when that may be expected to be done.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The scheme has now been approved and will be published in this month's Army Orders. The delay in publication has been caused by hesitation on the part of some of the staff to accept the new conditions.

Mr. NIELD: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is prepared to recommend the payment of removal expenses to members of the staff of surveyors for engineer services, or make an allowance in respect of such expenses, as is done in the case of the Army Accounts branch and to public servants in the Admiralty, Office of Works, and Inland Revenue Departments.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The question is under consideration.

Employment of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors.

Mr. NIELD: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has taken any steps or proposes to take any steps to give effect to the recommendation of Sir Edward Ward's Committee upon the employment of discharged soldiers and sailors (Paragraph 43) to remedy the regulation which prevents naval or military service being counted as part of the qualifying period for a Civil Service pension where the person has after a period of naval or military service passed into the civil employment of the State.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Will the hon. Member kindly refer to the Answer given by my right hon. friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to a Question put by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets on 3rd February last, to which I have nothing to add.

Goverment Employees and Territorial Camps.

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that, in response to his appeal to the large employers of labour throughout the country, many of them are not only granting their employees leave but also part of their wages whilst they are in camp, the Government will grant some concession to its employees who are at present in camp and those likely to go into camp during the next few months.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Civil servants may be allowed both their civil and military pay while attending a camp during their ordinary leave; and, further, they may receive special leave not exceeding fifteen days if necessary, and during that time will receive the equivalent of their civil salaries.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill—Date of Second Reading.

Mr. GLOVER (St. Helens): To ask the Prime Minister whether he can state the day when he will bring on the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill for Second Reading; and whether it is the intention of the Government to pass it into law this session.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I hope that the Second Reading may be taken on the 17th of this month, but I cannot give at this moment a definite pledge. Every effort will be made to pass the Bill into law during the present session.

Peers and Members of Parliament in Receipt of Government Pensions.

Dr. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the Prime Minister whether he can state how many of the Members of the present House of Lords and also Members of the present House of Commons are in receipt of a naval, military, Colonial, Indian, or Civil Service penison, or the recipient of any moneys paid out of the public funds in recognition of any past service either by himself or his ancestors.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I am not in possession of the information asked for by my hon. friend; but if he will move for a Return I will see what can be done.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Rosyth Dock Contract.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on Trent): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is proposed to insert a clause in the contract for the new docks at Rosyth compelling the contractors to erect suitable sanitary house accommodation for the men employed upon their works; and whether there will be any penalty imposed for the non-observance of such clause.

The CIVIL LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. Lambert, Devonshire, South Molton): It will not be compulsory under the contract to erect house accommodation. If, however, such accommodation is erected on Admiralty land, proper sanitary provisions would be enforced.

Mr. JOHN WARD: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Government, through the President of the Local Government Board the other day, gave a pledge that such buildings should be provided?

Mr. LAMBERT: My hon. friend may rely on it that the pledge will be redeemed.

Beer for Transports.

Mr. MEYSEY THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty the name of the contractor who has been given the contract for the supply of beer to troops on transports for 1908–9.

The SECRETARY to the ADMIRALTY (Dr. Macnamara, Camberwell, N.): The contract for the current year is held by the Portsmouth United Breweries, who tendered lowest.

Nelson's Signal.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if any change is contemplated in the flags now used on board H.M.S. "Victory," to represent Lord Nelson's signal on Trafalgar Day; whether he can state what has been in recent years the number of officials to look after the Admiralty records in the Library; and whether the number is found to be adequate.

Dr. MACNAMARA: Yes, Sir, it is intended to make a change in accordance with the recent discovery by the Admiralty Librarian. A signal-book has been unearthed, which makes it clear, in the opinion of the Board, that the flags used down to 1885 correctly reproduced Lord Nelson's signal. The alteration made at that time appears to have been unwarranted; hence the reversion to the older and correct flags. Prior to 3rd November, 1904, the Library staff consisted of one official and one messenger. From that date to 31st March, 1908, there were two officials and one messenger. It was considered that this staff was inadequate, and the duties were rearranged from 1st April, last, the staff now consisting of four officials and one messenger.

Territorial Artillery Drivers.

Viscount HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Thirsk): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider the advisability of granting to Artillery drivers of the Territorial Force the same grant for equitation as is allowed to Yeomen of the Territorial Force

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): No, Sir. It is not proposed to make this grant to Artillery drivers.

Handbooks for Artillerymen.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether all units which have received converted 15-pounder guns have been supplied with handbooks and with all the necessary implements to enable practice to be carried on and lines of fire to be laid out.

Mr. HALDANE: The handbook is in the Press, and will shortly be distributed. As regards the technical equipments I cannot yet say when it will be issued, but it will be ready as soon as the units have reached a sufficiently advanced state of training to require it.

Enlistments in the Territorial Army.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hamsphire, Fareham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many men have now enlisted in the Territorial Army; what percentage of the total establishment do they represent; and what percentage of those already enlisted have enlisted for one year only.

Mr. HALDANE: The figures for the 1st June, for which a few Returns have not yet reached the War Office are as follow:—

——	Yeomanry.	Artillery.	Engineers.	Infantry.	A.S.C.	R.A.M.C.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
Establishment -	24,864	44,801	14,975	194,727	8,619	13,919	294	302,199
Strength on May 1st.	12,037	14,089	5,243	72,179	968	3,893	Nil.	108,409
Strength on June 1st.	17,294	19,320	7,423	93,993	1,571	5,019	Nil.	144,620

This figure works out at about 48 per cent of the establishment of 302,199 non-commissioned officers and men. I am unable at the present moment to give the proportion of those who have enlisted for one year only, but of those who enlisted up to 1st May the proportion came to about 74 per cent.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the number of non-commissioned officers and men who have joined the Territorial Force up to the end of May; and whether it is intended to extend the special recruiting period beyond 30th June, and, if so, to what date.

Mr. HALDANE: As regards the first part of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to the Question I have just answered. As regards the last part of the Question, the reply is in the negative.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE asked whether the right hon. Gentleman's statement that the time would not be extended meant that after 1st July entries to the Territorial Army would be closed except in the case of new recruits.

Mr. HALDANE: Everybody who comes in after 1st July will come in as a new recruit, and not with the advantage the old Volunteer has. The indications are that a good many people are keeping back till the last.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): May we assume that the reduction in this force below the limit expected by the right hon. Gentleman will give us the satisfaction of a corresponding reduction in the cost?

Mr. HALDANE: That is not a question that arises out of anything that I have stated.

Territorial Force Regulations.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when the regulations for the Territorial Force will be issued.

Mr. HALDANE: It is hoped that the regulations will be ready by the end of this month or early in July.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many converted 15-pounder guns have been issued to the Territorial Artillery; and whether all such guns are complete with limbers.

Mr. HALDANE: Fifty-nine guns have been issued all complete with limbers.

Viscount HELMSLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman expect to get many Artillery drivers, seeing that the conditions are so much worse than those laid down for the Yeomanry, and the duty is harder?

Mr. HALDANE: Yes, I think they are quite as well off as other members of the Force, and, what is more, they are coming in very well.

Viscount HELMSLEY: May I ask whether these drivers will not have extra work compared with other members of the Force?

Mr. HALDANE: I do not think so. The arrangements which have been made keep that in view, and the drivers appear to be content.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): Has the right hon. Gentleman taken the opinion on this point of the hon. Member for Salford, who has been a driver?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire): Will the right hon. Gentleman seriously consider the great advantage of encouraging drivers to enter the service by offering this grant?

Mr. HALDANE: If I considered every suggestion made to me I should raise the Estimates very considerably.

Army Clothing Contracts.

Mr. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that contractors for Army clothing have to tender at full inclusive price, having to pay back 80 per cent. for materials; and whether they cannot tender the balance price left for cutting and making, or whether the inclusive price is necessary for the covering up of sweating by the Government.

Mr. HALDANE: It is necessary for the contractor to include the value of material in his tender and pay for it on issue, in order to protect the public from loss, and to ensure that he shall use his best endeavours to cut the material economically and to the best advantage. In addition to the Fair Wages Clause the contract contains stringent clauses prohibiting home work and requiring direct payment to the workers. Any complaint of infringement of these clauses is immediately investigated.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the tailors and tailoresses in Pimlico Stores working under the system of special making up of individual garments, viz., make the garment right through entirely, and not under the ordinary factory process, viz., the division of labour system, only receive 2s. 11½d. per service dress jacket instead of 5s. 6d., the price laid down by the War Office for the making, under that special way of production; and whether he will secure for them the proper wage laid down.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member appears to have been misinformed. The sewer does the sewing, basting and ironing, but ordinary machinists and button and button-hole machinists also work on the garment. The payment to the sewer of 2s. 11½d. for the jacket would, therefore, appear ample. I know nothing of the rate of 5s. 6d. mentioned by the hon. Member.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that contracts for serge jackets are being accepted by the Army Contracts Committee as low as 6s. and 7s. per jacket; and, as the contractor has to pay back 80 per cent. for materials, leaving him with 1s. 2¼d. and 1s. 5d. per jacket for the production, carriage, and profit, whether, as these prices must entail sweating, he will do anything to stop such contracting.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member is entirely mistaken in his figures. The amounts remaining for the contractor are double those stated. An inquiry was recently instituted into this branch of Army work and there is no reason to suppose that current rates of wages are not being paid under those contracts in accordance with the Fair Wages Clause. If, however, the hon. Member can furnish me with particulars of any case of infringement it shall be inquired into at once.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will grant the making of a uniform time log for the tailors in Pimlico Stores, as there are no means of ascertaining the fair basis of prices in existence, the employees having to accept any price paid them by those in authority, there being no uniform log to arrange what are the fair prices of making.

MR. HALDANE: There are no tailors employed at the Royal Army Clothing Department, and, presumably, the hon. Member refers to the cutters who are all time workers. The question of a log does not, therefore, arise.

Russian Tea Duty.

MR. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if the imposition by Russia on Indian teas of an increased duty in retaliation for our excluding Russian sugar has yet been removed; and whether he will consider the advisability of England, and not India, bearing the financial responsibility brought about by this retaliation.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): I understand that the Russian surtax on Indian and Ceylon teas imported into Russia by certain routes will be taken off from 1st September next. With reference to the second Question, it was stated by the Secretary of State in Answer to a Question on 25th July, 1907, that between 1902 and 1906, notwithstanding the surtax, the import of Indian teas into Russia had increased threefold.

Calcutta Floggings.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has any official information to the effect that the recent bomb outrages in India are the effect of the flogging of youths in Calcutta for political offences; whether such floggings have taken place; and, if so, what was the nature of the offences.

MR. BUCHANAN: It is not the case that youths have been whipped in Calcutta for political offences. During the last twelve months, nine youths have been sentenced to whipping for assaults on the police, and for throwing stones and breaking street lamps. One of these assaults took place during a disturbance outside the Chief Presidency Magistrate's Court-house in August last, after the conviction of certain persons for assaulting the police while engaged in searching, under warrant, the offices of "Yugantar." The other eight assaults occurred during the Beadon Square riots in October last, which followed a meeting held, not for any *bona fide* political purpose, but to celebrate the release from prison of certain persons convicted for rioting on another occasion.

New Hebrides Convention.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what amount of the £7,000 voted in 1907–8 for the expenses under the Anglo-French New Hebrides Convention was expended, and upon what items.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): Only £209 12s. 4d. was expended up to 31st March. It consisted of the following items—

	£	s.	d.
Salaries	105	7	10
Works	41	11	7
Miscellaneous	40	10	10
Police	22	2	1
Total	209	12	4

In reply to a further Question—

COLONEL SEELY said that more than £7,000 would be expended in the next few months.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Will the hon. Gentleman publish a Return showing the expenditure on the administration.

COLONEL SEELY: If the hon. Gentleman really wishes it I will consider that point, but all the particulars will appear in the Estimates.

New Hebrides Court-House.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the estimated expenditure during the present financial year upon the Joint Court and buildings to be erected in the New Hebrides Islands under the Franco-British Convention.

COLONEL SEELY: The cost of the Court-house and other buildings in connection with it, such as houses for the residence of the Judges, is estimated at £13,000. The purchase of land and equipment of the houses and offices of the Joint Court will probably cost between £2,000 and £3,000. All these sums are expected to be spent during the present financial year; but they are payable in equal proportions by His Majesty's Government and the French Government. The expenditure from the British Exchequer on buildings for the Joint Court and its members will, therefore, be approximately £8,000.

British Indians in Natal.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the introduction of three Bills into the Natal Legislature, the first of which prohibits indentured Indian labour from 30th June, 1911; the second forbids any licence to trade being given to an Indian after 31st December, 1908; and the third provides for the total extinction of all Indian licences to trade after ten years; and whether, looking to the racial character of the second and third of these Bills, they will be reserved for the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

COLONEL SEELY: Copies of the Bills have been received by the Secretary of State. They are to be brought before the Natal Parliament in its approaching session. The second and third, if passed in the form in which they have been gazetted, would not come into operation pending the signification of His Majesty's pleasure with respect to them.

SIR H. COTTON asked whether the Colonial Office would bear in mind that the provisions of these two Bills, absolutely prohibiting the right of British Indians to carry on their trade in Natal, were of a character unparalleled and unprecedented in the annals of Colonial or British legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) asked whether the prohibition applied to existing licences or to new licences only.

COLONEL SEELY: I am not sure. If the hon. Member will put down another Question I will ascertain.

MR. REES asked whether the provisions of these measures were not almost similar to the provisions which it was proposed to apply to the extinction of liquor licences in the United Kingdom.

COLONEL SEELY said he did not think so.

SIR H. COTTON: Is there any precedent for such legislation in the annals of other Colonial Legislatures?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. KEIR HARDIE asked if the Colonial Office would reserve their assent to the Bills until the House had had an opportunity of considering them.

COLONEL SEELY: There is a clause in two of them which prevents them coming into operation until assent has been given.

Antigua.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether there exist Colonial Statutes investing the executive with power of suspending the ordinary law, such as that of which the repeal was directed by Lord Carnarvon in a despatch to the Governor of Antigua set forth in his circular despatch.

COLONEL SEELY: The only legislative provision of the kind of which I am aware is an Order in Council of 6th November, 1832, passed in respect of the Island of Mauritius, but I will ascertain whether similar provisions exist elsewhere.

Dinizulu's Salary.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reference to the stoppage of Dinizulu's salary without the assent of the Secretary of State, whether a reply has yet been received from the Governor of Natal in response to the telegram from the Colonial Office of the 30th ultimo; and, if so, whether he will communicate it to Members of the House.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a reply has been received to the telegram addressed on Saturday to the Governor of Natal regarding the stoppage of Dinizulu's salary; and, if so, whether he will communicate it to the House.

COLONEL SEELY: In answer to these Questions I have to say that no reply has yet been received.

MR. FLYNN asked whether the Colonial Office would telegraph again, pressing for an immediate reply, as the question was one of great urgency.

COLONEL SEELY: We are in communication by telegraph.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) asked whether there had not been time to receive a reply.

COLONEL SEELY: No, there has not been time to receive a reply considering the discussions that must take place before a reply is sent.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reference to the suspension of Dinizulu's stipend and the action of the Governor of Natal in seeking the assent of His Majesty's Government thereto, whether the Colonial Office can give any indication of the date upon which the matter will come before the Supreme Court; and whether, in view of the hardship inflicted on the prisoner, who is involved in expense owing to the prolongation of the legal proceedings and the uncertainty as to when the Supreme Court can give its judgment, the Colonial Office will meantime take steps to ensure that this chieftain shall be reinstated in his position of an induna in receipt of salary, and that such salary shall be continued in compliance with the honourable understanding arrived at pending the result of the proceedings instituted against him.

Colonel SEELY: With regard to the first part of my hon. friend's Question, I have no further official information. I have, however, seen a telegram in this morning's papers to the effect that Dinizulu's counsel notified the Natal Government on Monday that it would be useless to proceed with the action in the Supreme Court for the payment of the salary, on the ground that the hearing could not be reached until after Dinizulu's trial. The telegram adds that counsel is now applying to the Government for their consent to the action being submitted to the jurisdiction of a magistrate's court. Inquiry is being made by telegraph as to the facts of the matter. With regard to the second part of the Question, I hope to have an opportunity of making a brief statement in the course of to-day's debate.

Mr. FLYNN, recalling the terms of Lord Elgin's despatch of 19th March on this subject, asked whether the Colonial Office did not recognise that there was a great principle involved here, and not merely a question of £500.

Colonel SEELY: His Majesty's Government adhere fully to the statement of Lord Elgin.

British-Indians in the Transvaal.

Sir WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the agreement entered into by the Transvaal Government with the British-Indians in January last, suspending the Registration Law in favour of voluntary registration, contemplated the repeal of the Act; and whether, in view of the revival of the Indian agitation in that Colony against what would appear to be a threatened breach of that agreement, His Majesty's Government propose to take any action in the matter.

Mr. HAROLD COX: At the same time may I ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to a revival of the British-Indian troubles in the Transvaal, arising out of a departure by the Transvaal Government from what the Indians contend were the terms of the settlement; whether the settlement of January last between the Transvaal Government and the British-Indians, announced by His Majesty's Government to this House, was made with their knowledge and approval; and whether His Majesty's Government propose to take any steps to prevent any departure from the terms of the agreement then made.

Colonel SEELY: In reply to these Questions, I would beg leave to refer to my Answer to a similar question on Monday last. Inquiry is being made of the Governor, and I cannot add anything pending his reply. The settlement of January last was arrived at without the intervention of Lord Elgin, though he expressed his satisfaction concerning it.

Vaccination in Ceylon.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if there is any law under which men can be forcibly vaccinated in Ceylon; and if he has any official information to the effect that at Jaffna a vaccinator, assisted by a police constable, forcibly vaccinated passers-by, subjecting one man to such violence that he swooned.

Colonel SEELY: The Answer to both Questions would certainly appear to be in the negative, but the Secretary of State will make inquiries as to the truth of the report contained in the *Ceylon Observer* of 2nd May, to which I understand my hon. friend refers.

Civil Service in Tropical Countries.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether proposals have been formulated for the instruction of Civil servants proceeding to tropical countries; and, if so, whether he will furnish particulars of the scheme, and give the names of the lecturers who are giving the instruction and their emoluments.

COLONEL SEELY: The scheme referred to is specially designed for the instruction of officers selected for appointment to posts in East and West Africa. The courses of instruction are held at the Imperial Institute, and each course extends over three months. Lectures are delivered on the following subjects: Tropical hygiene and public health, by Dr. C. W. Daniels, Director of the London School of Tropical Medicine; law, by Mr. L. W. Kershaw, barrister-at-law, Assistant Registrar to the Court of Criminal Appeal; accounts, by Mr. E. Harris, I.S.O., of the Board of Education; and tropical economic products, vegetable and mineral, by members of the staff of the Imperial Institute. The total annual cost of the scheme, including the emoluments of the lecturers, is estimated at about £700, which will be defrayed from the funds of the Colonies and Protectorates concerned.

Consular Commercial Department.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the proposed changes have been made in the Consular Commercial Department of the Foreign Office; and if the Chambers of Commerce have received notice of the new regulations.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD GREY): My right hon. friend knows of no such changes as the hon. Member alludes to; perhaps he will explain the Question to my right hon. friend privately.

The Royal Visit to Russia.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that a Memorial has been signed by a number of Members of the House setting forth that they have no desire to deprecate a private visit of His Majesty to His Royal relatives in Russia; and if he will advise that the visit should not partake of a State or official character.

MR. J. A. PEASE: My right hon. friend has received a memorial signed by several hon. Members. It expresses a hope that the projected visit may be abandoned, but contains no reference to a private visit such as that quoted in the first part of the hon. Member's Question. With regard to the second part of the Question, my right hon. friend is unable to advise His Majesty in the sense desired.

MR. W. THORNE asked whether they were to understand that the Government acquiesced in the brutal murders that took place in Russia? [Cries of "Order."]

MR. SPEAKER: That is hardly proper language to apply to a friendly State.

MR. FLYNN asked whether it was too late to suggest to His Majesty that the visit should be of a private, and not of a political or official character?

MR. J. A. PEASE: I think that Question had better be addressed to the Prime Minister.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Why is not the Foreign Secretary here? He knows these are important Questions.

Siamese Protected States.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is yet in a position to inform the House if the Siamese protected States of Kedah, Tringgann, and Kelantan are to be incorporated into the Federated Malay States; and, if so, what terms and conditions have been arranged with the Siamese Government.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The answer to the first Question is in the negative. As regards the second Question, my right hon. friend is unable at present to give any indication beyond what was contained in his reply to the hon. Member for North-West Lanark on the 18th ultimo.

Old-age Pensions.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Prime Minister what is the estimated annual difference in cost to the proposed old-age pension scheme between fixing the amount of the joint pensions for married couples over seventy, living together, at 7s. 6d. a week, and fixing it at 10s.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): On the information available, the difference in cost is estimated to amount, approximately, to £344,000.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the question of reducing the age to sixty-five years, and will he state what extra expenditure that change would involve?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I think that would be rather more than £344,000.

Government Waste Paper.

MR. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that within the last few days when cargo was being loaded on a ship bound for Bordeaux from London a bale burst, and the contents, which were scattered over the ship, were found to be registers from His Majesty's prisons; whether these documents had been sold to some foreign contractor as wastepaper; and, if so, whether steps will be taken to prevent such a disposal of these confidential documents, especially in view of the fact that some of them are of so recent a date as 1896.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have no information with regard to the occurrence in question. I have no reason to doubt that the present arrangements are sufficient to prevent any waste paper from the prisons which is of a confidential character being made public; but if the hon. Member will give me further particulars of the papers to which he refers, I will make inquiry. The arrangements for the disposal of waste paper are made by the Stationery Office.

The Druce Case.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the sentence of eighteen months' hard labour on Mrs. Margaret Jane Louise Hamilton, aged seventy-three, at the Old Bailey on 28th May; and, in consequence of her age and character, will he advise that the sentence be reduced.

MR. GLADSTONE: No sufficient grounds have been brought to my notice for recommending any interference with this sentence on the part of the Crown; It is open to the prisoner to apply for leave to appeal against the sentence passed on her if there are sufficient grounds for doing so. In any case her health will receive proper medical attention in prison.

Mile End Motor 'Bus Fatality.

MR. TIMOTHY DAVIES (Fulham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the motor omnibus accident in the Mile End Road last Sunday, which resulted in the death and mutilation of a young girl; is he aware that lives are almost daily sacrificed in the streets of London by the careless and furious driving of such vehicles; and, as a matter of public safety, will he cause more stringent regulations to be framed and enforced, so as to make it reasonably safe for young children and old people to cross our public streets without endangering their limbs and their lives by so doing.

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir, my attention was drawn to this accident, and I am aware that motor omnibuses are responsible for a number of fatal accidents in the Metropolitan area. The police had cognisance of thirty-six such accidents in 1907, but the fatal accidents caused by horse-drawn vehicles were four times as numerous. I will call the special attention of the police to the necessity for strictly enforcing the traffic regulations in streets where children are apt to congregate.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to safeguard the lives of passengers and conductors of those 'buses from attacks by Russian and Polish aliens?

[No Answer was returned.]

London Street Traffic.

Mr. CARR-GOMM: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has power to prevent motor omnibuses from travelling along narrow and crowded streets in London to the public danger; and, if so, will action be taken with regard to the motor omnibuses in Great Smith Street, Westminster, with a view to preventing the occurrence there of similar accidents to that which occurred in Mile End on Sunday last.

Mr. GLADSTONE: As I stated in answer to the hon. Member's Question on 18th May, the Commissioner of Police has no power to prescribe the routes which omnibuses are to follow and to prevent their passing through any street. If the police observe any motor omnibus being driven at a speed or in a manner which is dangerous to the public, they take proceedings against the driver. And the Motor Car Act, 1903, provides that regard must be had to such considerations as the narrowness and crowded nature of a street in deciding whether or not an offence has been committed. A number of such prosecutions have been taken and the drivers convicted; in 1907, the prosecutions numbered 348, and the convictions 333.

Building Dangers.

Mr. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to give effect to the regulations proposed by the Committee of inquiry into dangers attendant upon building operations; and, if so, when.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave to a Question of the hon. Member for the Barnard Castle Division on the 14th of last month. Legislation is required, and I hope to introduce a Bill very soon, which I trust will not be contentious.

Factory Inspectors.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Liecester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he now proposes to impose on factory inspectors' assistants who wish to become inspectors the examination which candidates for inspectorships have to undergo when they have not been assistants in the first instance.

Mr. GLADSTONE: In ordinary circumstances inspectors' assistants desiring to become inspectors must undergo the same examination as other candidates; but, as I announced in this House on 28th November, 1906, I have made arrangements by which assistants of exceptional ability will sometimes be promoted without competing with other candidates. Two such special appointments have recently been made.

Chief Factory Inspector's Salary.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why, whilst the maximum salary of the office of Chief Inspector of Factories is entered in the Estimates as £1,200, the present Chief Inspector is to be paid £1,500 for 1908–9; and what is the significance of the explanation, personal salary, which is attached to this last sum.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The present Chief Inspector, Dr. Whitelegge, completed twelve years' service in March last. In view of his high qualifications and the great services he has rendered, the Treasury, on my strong recommendation, sanctioned the increase of his salary to £1,500. This remuneration is small compared with what his abilities might have commanded outside the Government service. The term "personal salary" means that the salary is personal to the present holder of the office, and that his successor will enter at a lower rate of remuneration.

Portsmouth Printing Contract.

Mr. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the firm of Messrs. W. T. Williams, Limited, printers, of Portsmouth, at present engaged on contracts for his Department, are employing more than the number of apprentices agreed on by the Master Printers and the Typographical Association, and that some of the men employed are not paid the rate of wage current in the district; and whether he will take steps towards having the Fair Wage Clause enforced in this case.

Mr. GLADSTONE: A complaint was recently made to me by the Portsmouth United Trade and Labour Council that this firm, who are the contractors for printing the Calendars of Prisoners at Quarter Sessions and Assizes at Portsmouth, were not observing the conditions of labour "as agreed to by the Master Printers and the Typographical Association." No details were given, so I wrote to the council asking for full particulars of their complaint, but I have not yet received a reply. As soon as they reply I will cause inquiry to be made in the matter. The contract provides for the payment of current rate of wages, but does not, and could not, limit the number of apprentices.

Imported Milk Analysis.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether samples of imported new milk are frequently taken and submitted to analysis; and whether such samples have been found to contain preservatives or other adulterants.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): During the two years ended 31st March last fifty samples of imported fresh milk were taken by Customs officers, and submitted to analysis under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, but in no case was a sample found to contain preservatives or to be adulterated.

Railway Inquiry.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the promised inquiry into the constitution of the railways and the question of railway rates has yet commenced; who form the Committee of Inquiry; and whether the inquiry is taking place, or will take place, in public.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The formal inquiry to which the hon. Member refers is not being held in public. My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already given information with regard to the nature of the inquiry and the constitution of the Conference in reply to Questions addressed to him on 4th March last, and I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the reply then given together with a list of members of the Conference.

American Beef Trust.

Mr. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that American refrigerated beef has risen in price from 3s. 4d. per butcher stone in December last to 4s. 6d. on 27th May, River Plate chilled beef from 2s. 4d. to 3s. 6d., and River Plate frozen from 2s. to 2s. 5d., notwithstanding an increase of 46,000 cwts. in the quantity of beef imported from the United States and Argentina for the four months ended 30th April compared with last year; whether he is aware that such imports are controlled by certain American firms known as the Beef Trust, who have the power to fix the price of imported beef to the consumer so as to keep up the cost in their own interest, seeing that the price of English beef has only increased from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 1d. during the same period; and whether it is proposed to take action in the interest of the consumers by removing restrictions upon the importation of live cattle for immediate slaughter from Continental countries officially declared to be free from foot-and-mouth disease.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I understand that the prices quoted are approximately correct, but that there was not an increase, but a decrease of 44,000 cwts. in the imports of fresh beef from the United States and the Argentine in the period referred to in the Question. With regard to the second part, I can only refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him to a similar inquiry on the 27th ultimo.

Mr. BOWERMAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the American House of Representatives appointed a Committee to inquire into the operation of the Beef Trust, and whether similar action cannot be taken in this country to devise some means to relieve the British consumer from these increasing exactions?

Mr. CHURCHILL: The operations of these great trusts have grown up under protective tariffs.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Do I understand that the Government will assent to the appointment of a Committee?

Mr. FLYNN: What rise in price would have taken place if there had been an import duty on meat?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I shall be glad to consider all the facts that may be brought to my notice.

Village Landing Places on the Thames.

Mr. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the village of Whitchurch, situate on the banks of the Thames, is now practically debarred from access to the river, owing to a footpath from the village to the lock having been closed and a concrete wall erected along the old village landing-place by a private person; whether this has been done with the consent of the Thames Conservancy or, if not, whether they have taken or are intending to take any action in the matter; and whether, in view of this and other cases which have recently occurred, he will consider the advisability of inserting a clause in the Port of London Bill to impose upon the Thames Conservancy the duty of maintaining a public landing-place for each village and town on the banks of the Thames, or providing a new one when the old one has been closed, and of maintaining generally the public rights.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am informed by the Thames Conservancy that they are aware of the claim set up by some of the inhabitants of Whitchurch to a right of way to the river over the property of the mill owner, and that this access was closed without reference to the Conservancy, who after careful inquiry were satisfied that they had no power to intervene. The question of providing public landing-places on the banks of the Thames is one which would require much consideration. I doubt if it could be satisfactorily dealt with by the present Bill. The matter shall, however, be noted.

Public Health Food Regulations.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state when it is proposed to issue the regulations under the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act, 1907.

The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. John Burns, Battersea): I hope very shortly.

West Ham Board of Guardians—Suggested Inquiry.

Mr. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to a resolution passed by the West Ham Union Board of Guardians asking for a Local Government Board inquiry with reference to the members of the board and their travelling expenses, and, if so, whether he is prepared to grant such an inquiry; and whether the Local Government Board are prepared to prosecute those contractors whom they did not prosecute when the West Ham Union Board of Guardians asked them to do so after the revelations of last year.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I have not received any application for an inquiry as to the matter referred to in the first part of the Question. I understand that it is now before the auditor in connection with the audit he is holding of the accounts of the guardians. The matter referred to in the latter part of the Question was one for the Director of Public Prosecutions, who has had the whole subject before him.

Mr. W. THORNE: How many officers of the guardians have been dismissed in consequence of the right hon. Gentleman's inquiries?

Mr. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

House Accommodation for Crumlin Works.

Mr. JOHN WARD: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the lack of house accommodation for the men employed in sinking new pits at Crumlin, Monmouth; whether he is aware that the whole lodging accommodation of the place is used up, and that some of the men pay 4d. per night to be allowed to sit up in certain lodging-houses, and that these houses are using the beds double shift, day and night, causing hardships to the men, who are unable to rest on Sundays; and what action, if any, it is proposed to take to deal with this situation.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My hon. friend has called my attention to this subject. I am aware that allegations are made to the effect stated in the Question, and I have given directions that inquiry shall be made into the matter.

Wages in Devonport—Distress Committee Work.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that the town clerk of Devonport has advised the distress committee that the payment of trade union rates of wages is not allowable, and, if paid, may be surcharged by the Local Government Board auditor; and whether he will issue instructions for the guidance of distress committees in this matter.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have seen a newspaper report of the meeting of the distress committee at which this matter was discussed, but I do not know precisely what advice was given by the town clerk. It is necessary that the total remuneration paid by a distress committee to any person for any given period of continuous work should be less than that which would under ordinary circumstances be earned by an unskilled labourer for continuous work during the same period. If the committee adopt for skilled work the trade union rate of payment, they may arrange for the employment of the workmen for such number of hours in each day as will, with the deduction for absence in search of regular work, give a week's pay less than that of an unskilled labourer. I have expressed this view when I have been applied to on the subject. I do not think any general instructions are needed with regard to it.

Paddington Workhouse.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board how many visits his Board's architect has paid to the new receiving wards at Paddington Workhouse, and what the nature of his reports on the same are; whether the contractor has been paid the full amount of the tender, and, if not, what proportion is still owing to him, and does that sum represent the difference in the value of the work tendered for and the work done; and whether, if the full amount has not yet been paid to the contractor, steps are being taken to see that the work is carried out according to the specifications.

MR. JOHN BURNS: Some representations were made to me with respect to these wards and I instructed one of the architects of the Local Government Board to make a special visit and report with respect to them. In his Report he pointed out certain defects in the work, and I called the attention of the guardians to them. The guardians appointed a Committee to examine the defects, and to supervise the remedies required. The contractors' tender was for £4,855, and sums amounting to £4,600 have already been paid to them. The final statement from the guardians' architect has, however, not yet been received, and hence it cannot be stated how much is still owing to the contractors. The defects are stated to have now been remedied, and the contractors have undertaken to deal with any further defects which may be discovered during the next twelve months.

Head Postmen.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General what is the number of smaller head offices at which there are no head postmen or assistant head postmen; what are the qualifications necessary for an office to have these positions granted to them; and whether it is his intention to create the positions of head or assistant head postmen at those offices where they do not at present exist, carrying with them the allowances recommended by the Hobhouse Report in Paragraph 461.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The number of offices referred to by the hon. Member is about 490. The creation of a superior post depends upon the number of officers to be supervised and the quality of the work performed. Superior posts are created in each case where there is need for such posts. The Select Committee on Post Office Servants expressly stated, in Paragraph 466 of their Report, that individual and even whole classes of offices may not require a supervising officer of the rank appropriate to their scale.

Sub-Postmasters.

Mr. GRAYSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Colne Valley): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware of the discontent among some 15,000 sub-postmasters in consequence of their low scale of pay; and, if so, whether he will take steps, without further delay, to put in force the scale of pay for sub-postmasters recommended by the Select Committee on Post Office servants.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The scheme of revision of the pay of sub-postmasters will be published shortly.

Anglo-American Penny Postage.

Sir WILLIAM HOLLAND (Yorkshire, W.R., Rotherham): I desire to ask the Postmaster-General a Question of which I have given him private notice, viz., whether he is in a position to make any statement in regard to the negotiations which he has been conducting with the United States Government in reference to the introduction of Anglo-American penny postage.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The question of Anglo-American penny postage has been under the consideration of the Postmaster-General of the United States and myself. I am glad to be able to announce that I have now received a telegram from Mr. Myer stating that he is prepared to accept the proposal I made to him for the establishment of penny postage between the two countries. Certain arrangements have to be made before the change comes into force, but, on and after 1st October next, the rate of letter postage to the United States will be the same as that to the Colonies—viz., 1d. per ounce throughout the scale, instead of 2½d. as at present. I feel sure that this announcement will give satisfaction to the House. I may, perhaps, be allowed to express my confident belief that this reduction in the postal rates between the United Kingdom and the United States will, by greatly increasing the freedom of personal and commercial intercourse, not only further the many interests the two nations have in common, but also strengthen the mutual good feeling which happily exists between them.

South Kensington Museum.

Sir WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, having regard to the insufficiency of the present temporary buildings at South Kensington for the housing and display of the collections of scientific instruments and apparatus belonging to the Government, and to the importance of making these collections useful to teachers and students of science, and to the Imperial College of Science and Technology, he will consider the advisability of erecting a suitable building for a science museum on the site of the existing temporary galleries.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury): I think it would be eminently desirable that there should be a science museum properly housed in immediate propinquity to the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and if the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition feel themselves in a position to cooperate I should be happy to bring the matter under the notice of my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it is obvious that any step requiring the financial assistance of the Government could only be undertaken with due regard to the general calls upon the Exchequer.

Gaelic Instruction in Scottish Schools.

Mr. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing the number of schools in each Gaelic-speaking county of Scotland in which there is a teacher able to read and to write, respectively, the Gaelic language.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): It is not possible to make a Return in the form asked for without making special investigations. But I may state for the information of the hon. Member that the number of schools which have claimed the so-called "Gaelic" Grant in 1907–1908 is as follows:—

In Argyll - - -	- 26
In Inverness - -	- 61
In Ross - - -	- 56
In Sutherland - -	- 15

King's County Extra Police Charges.

Mr. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the county council of King's County have refused to pay the charges levied upon the county for extra police; what was the amount of those charges for the twelve months ending 31st March; and what steps will be taken to enforce payment.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange): The police authorities have been in correspondence with the council of King's County on the subject of the claim for extra police expenses, but no definite refusal to pay has so far been received from the council. The total amount of the charge for the year ending 31st March, 1908, is £645. The usual steps to enforce payment will be taken if the council should fail to discharge the claim.

Midleton Explosion.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received particulars of a gunpowder explosion at Midleton, County Cork, on 26th May; and whether the occurrence was of an intimidatory character.

Mr. CHERRY: On the night of 26th May two windows in the porch of the house of Mrs. Kate Walsh were broken by means of an explosion of blasting powder. The explosive was placed about six yards from the wall of the house. The occurrence appears to have been of an intimidatory character.

Westmeath Cattle-driving Prisoners.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether complaint has been made by the Westmeath County Council of the cost of conveying prisoners charged with cattle-driving to the Courts in North Westmeath; and what explanation has been given by the police as to the reason for the charges made.

Mr. CHERRY: The Westmeath County Council have complained of the excessive cost of conveying prisoners charged with cattle-driving to the Courts in North Westmeath. The explanation of the police is that cars could not be procured at less expense, owing to the unpopular character of the work.

Feeragh Outrage.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received information concerning an attack with firearms upon the house of a man living near Feeragh, in the neighbourhood of Tuam, made with the object of terrifying the occupant into surrendering a grass farm.

Mr. CHERRY: On the night of 6th May, two shots were fired outside the house occupied by the tenant of a grazing farm at Feeragh, and on the following morning a flattened revolver bullet was found beside the wall of the house. The police cannot express any opinion as to the object of the offender in firing the shots.

Irish-grown Tobacco.

Mr. LEVERTON HARRIS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the 30 per cent. preference given to tobacco growers in Ireland, he will extend this preference to growers of tobacco in other parts of the British Empire.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Member apparently refers to the rebate of duty which is granted in Ireland upon tobacco grown for experimental purposes in certain strictly limited areas; there is no preference in favour of tobacco cultivated upon a commercial scale. It is a necessary condition of such experiments that they should be conducted under the supervision of the Board of Inland Revenue, and it would therefore be impossible to extend the concession to any place to which the jurisdiction of that Board does not extend.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is prepared to consider the granting of a similar rebate on beet-grown sugar in this country, and whether he calls growing for experimental purposes 68,000 lbs. of tobacco which paid in duty over £10,000?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The whole experiments only extended to something between 80 and 100 acres, and, therefore, that would be experimental. I will consider the other suggestion of the hon. Member.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman is aware that that was the only miserable advantage to Ireland from the tobacco industry, which was destroyed by English legislation?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. JAMES HOPE: Are we to understand that if the experiment is successful the rebate will be withdrawn?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: We had a full discussion the other day, and I can hardly answer a Question of that kind across the floor of the House.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Is he prepared to grant a similar rebate to tobacco grown in Scotland?

[No Answer was returned.]

Minority Representative.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will consider the advisability of appointing a Committee to consider the various schemes which have been put forward for providing that at a parliamentary election the representative shall not be returned by a minority of the persons voting, and for securing at a single election the advantages of the second ballot.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The schemes referred to by my hon. friend will, naturally, receive the consideration of the Government, but whether it will be found advisable to secure the assistance of a Committee I cannot at present say.

Fatal Accidents Bill.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will state on what date the Fatal Accidents Bill will be introduced.

MR. ASQUITH: I assume that the Bill referred to is the Fatal Accidents, Damages, Bill, which has passed through the House of Lords, and has already been introduced into this House, and is on the Paper to-day for the Second Reading. I cannot undertake to fix a date, but it is hoped that an early day may be found for the further progress of this and other small Bills.

Sugar Convention.

MR. VILLIERS (Brighton): I beg to ask the Prime Minister how many and which of the Powers signatories of The Sugar Convention Additional Act, 1907, deemed it necessary to obtain, in some form, the assent of their Parliaments or popular assemblies of a Parliamentary character, to this Additional Act before ratifying it; how many and which of the signatory Powers ratified it without obtaining or asking for any such assent; and, seeing that Great Britain is one of the Powers which did not obtain any such assent, is it the intention of His Majesty's Government to make in future with foreign Powers binding agreements affecting the industry and commerce of this country without any reference to Parliament.

MR. ASQUITH: So far as the information of His Majesty's Government goes, the Additional Act received the assent of the Belgian, French, German, Netherlands, and Swedish Parliaments before ratification by those States. I have no information as to Austria-Hungary, Luxemburg, Peru, Russia, or Switzerland. There is no intention of departing from the usual constitutional practice, which is that, where fresh legislation is required to carry out an agreement, the assent of Parliament, or of the House of Commons only where fiscal change only is involved, should be obtained before ratification.

Registers of Bills of Sale and Judgments.

MR. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the registers of bills of sale and of county court judgments were created for the purpose of saving traders and the public from suffering loss through giving credit to the persons whose names appear in these registers, in ignorance of the facts which the registers disclose; is he aware that the fees charged (2s.6d. each entry inspected in the the register of bills of sale and 1s. each entry inspected in the register of County Court judgments and other registers) obstruct traders and the public from obtaining information the registers are intended to give, and goes a long way to render the creation of the registers abortive; is he aware that the *Edinburgh Gazette* of 21st February, 1908, contains a new table of fees payable into the Exchequer for the Sheriff Courts in Scotland, and that the fees for searching similar registers in Scotland are for a weekly inspection for three months, 10s.; or twice weekly for three months, £1; and will he recommend a reduction of the fees charged for searching the registers of bills of sale and County Court judgments, so as to be approximately nearer those charged in Scotland.

MR. ASQUITH: My hon. friend appears to have been misinformed as to the fees charged for inspecting the registers of bills of sale and County Court judgments. For the former a fee of 1s. is charged; further fees are only payable when an abstract or office copy is required. For searching the register of County Court judgments, a fee of 6d. is charged, or a composite fee of 10s. may be paid for a search to cover forty names. Moreover, an arrangement exists for furnishing information of such judgments to mercantile agencies, who publish and distribute the information for the benefit of traders. In these circumstances, I do not see any sufficient reason for modifying the fees in the direction indicated by the Question.

The King's Visit to Russia.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I rise to ask your ruling, Mr. Speaker, with regard to certain Questions handed into the Clerks at the Table. One Question was as follows—To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that for the eleven months ending 19th April, 1908, the number of political prisoners executed in Russia after trial by court-martial was 1,050, and that for the twenty-eight months ending February, 1908, no fewer than 78,000 political subjects were sent into exile without trial; and whether it is the intention of the Government to inform the Tsar of Russia and his advisers that such methods of treating persons agitating for constitutional reforms offend the sense of justice of the people of the British Empire and must, if persisted in, lead to the withdrawal of His Majesty's representative from Russian territory. That was the Question, Sir. I should like to ask on what grounds a Question addressed to the Foreign Office on a matter of public concern was refused by the Clerks at the Table.

*MR. SPEAKER: I received notice of the hon. Member's Question, and have made inquiries into the matter. I understand that what occurred was that the hon. Member brought the Question to the Table, where some conversation took place between the clerks and himself. The hon. Member then took the Question away. The clerks were under the impression that the hon. Member was going to show me the Question with a view to getting my judgment on it. The hon. Member did not ask the clerks to submit the Question to me. If he had done so they would have carried out his request in that respect. It was only this afternoon that the Question was brought to my attention. If it had been submitted to me, I think it would have been my duty to have pointed out to the hon. Member that the Question really gave information rather than sought it, and that with regard to the second part, it is no business of the Foreign Office to manage the internal concerns of a friendly State like Russia. With regard to the third part of the Question, that is entirely a matter of opinion, which the hon. Member is entitled to raise in debate, but which he is hardly justified in putting as a question of policy to the representative of the Foreign Office in this House.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: The Question was handed in, not by myself, but on my behalf, on Friday night. I learned that it had been rejected, and I entrusted it to an official of our party, who again approached the Clerks at the Table on Monday. Had I known that they expected me to take your opinion, that course would have been followed. May I ask, Sir, whether the ruling you have just given is intended to be permanent, or is it meant to meet the exceptional circumstances of the approaching visit of His Majesty to Russia; because, if I may say so with great respect, it seems to me the most serious ruling in the matter of curtailing the liberties of Members of this House which I have ever heard given from the Chair.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I do not see that there is any curtailment of any liberty. The hon. Member is entitled to ask for information. In these Questions he gives it and volunteers it. The object of Questions is to obtain from Ministers information which is in their offices of an official character which they are able to give. It is perfectly obvious that the Foreign Office has not the information which the hon. Member himself had put in the Question, and with regard to the second part, I do not think it is any novelty on my part to suggest that the internal affairs of a friendly State are not managed by the Government of this country.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Is it not the common practice of the House to recite some of the facts, and then to ask a Question arising out of those facts, a course which I have endeavoured to follow in this Question? I did not ask the Foreign Office to interfere in the affairs of Russia, but to point out certain of the consequences which might follow if the present course is persisted in. This is, I hope, a matter open to the Foreign Office, and has been acted upon in connection with other States.

*Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter for argument, which the hon. Member is fully entitled to raise in debate, but it is hardly one which comes within the ordinary rules of private Questions, which must be of a more limited character than speeches in debate.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked what business would be taken after the holidays.

Mr. ASQUITH said that he proposed to take the Customs and Inland Revenue Vote on Wednesday, 10th June, and the Board of Agriculture Vote on Thursday, 11th June. On Friday, 12th June, they would take the Second Reading of the Home Secretary's Prevention of Crime Bill, and, if time permitted, some small Bills on the Order Paper. Monday and Tuesday, 15th and 16th June, they proposed to give to the Second Reading of the Old-Age Pension Bill.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Can the Prime Minister say when the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill will be taken?

Mr. ASQUITH: I would rather not go beyond Tuesday at present, but it will be taken at an early day.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

First Report brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 166.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Coroners (Ireland) Bill and of the Local Registration of Title

(Ireland) Bill): Colonel Seely, Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Herbert Samuel; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bills): Mr. Glendinning, Mr. Birrell, Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland and Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Public Rights of Way Bill): Mr. Secretary Gladstone; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Sir Edward Strachey.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Colonel Seely; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Hobhouse.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C. (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. James Duncan; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Ryland Adkins.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C. (in respect of the Post Office Savings Bank Bill): Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Kearley, and Sir Edward Strachey; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Hobhouse, and Mr. Attorney-General.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

RULE COMMITTEE BILL.

"To amend the Judicature Acts, 1873 to 1894, with respect to the persons in whom the power of making Rules of Court under those Acts is vested," presented by Mr. Hills; supported by Mr. Horridge, Mr. Micklem, and Mr. Rawlinson; to be read a second time upon Thursday, 11th June, and to be printed. [Bill 258.]

TUBERCULOSIS PREVENTION (IRELAND) BILL.

"To prevent the spread and provide for the treatment of Tuberculosis; and for other purposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. Birrell; supported by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 259.]

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That this House do meet To-morrow, at Twelve of the Clock."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington): I do not rise for the purpose of opposing this Motion. But it is the first time we have had a Motion of this kind put down for an allotted day. There are one or two questions I wish to ask. The first question is: Is there to be any time-limit to Questions to-morrow? There are sixty-nine starred Questions on the Paper. I think it is obvious that there can be no time-limit under the existing Standing Orders. The second question is: When is the sitting of the House to terminate? Is it to terminate at five o'clock, or at eleven o'clock, as on an ordinary allotted day? The third question is: Supposing the sitting terminates at five o'clock, is to-morrow to be an allotted day or only half an allotted day? And supposing it is to be only half a day, does it require a special Resolution declaring that to-morrow is to be regarded as a Friday? I think perhaps these questions ought to be put to you, Mr. Speaker, rather than to the Prime Minister. My only aim is to get some record on the proceedings of the House of what is to be the effect of quite a new departure.

MR. ASQUITH: I really think, Sir, it is more a matter for you.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think I can answer the right hon. Gentleman's questions. As to the first point, whether the time-limit to Questions applies to to-morrow, I have to say that the time-limit does apply. Questions may go on till a quarter to four. In reply to the second question, as to the termination of the day, the sitting will terminate at eleven for opposed business and at 11.30 p.m. for unopposed business. Respecting the third question, as to whether to-morrow will be an allotted day, it will be an allotted day, if no business other than Supply is taken.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT (WHITSUNTIDE).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House, at its rising to-morrow, do adjourn until Wednesday, the 10th June."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

MR. VILLIERS (Brighton) observed that in these days of headlines and sensations memories registered impressions but very faintly. Political memories were short. He rose that afternoon to recall to the House some facts which it appeared had either been forgotten or over-looked. It would be remembered that the Conservative Government, in 1903, passed an Act of Parliament assenting to the Sugar Convention of 1902. The Bill in that House, both on its Second Reading and in Committee, was strenuously opposed by the present Government who were then in opposition, on the ground that by it we, a nation of consumers, were asked to enter into an agreement with several sugar-producing states, which would have the effect of limiting the supply of sugar to Great Britain, and thereby raising the price of sugar in this country. The Liberal opposition was based on the ground, primarily, that the Convention was protective. The words of the present Solicitor-General were—

> "This Convention is expressly founded on protection. The Convention is a protective document."

Then, again, according to the present President of the Board of Trade—

> "The object of the Bill was, in fact, to raise the price of sugar."

And, as he said—

> "Therefore, the measure would be much more accurately described as the Dear Sugar Convention Bill."

It was also objected to as hampering our commercial freedom. The present Lord Chancellor said of it—

> "I am sorry to say that I think this Convention is humiliating, because it subjects the legislation of this country to the dictation of foreign delegates."

And the United States of America refused to be a party to it, as presumably she did not see the force of subjecting her market to the control of a European syndicate. What had been the effect upon this country during the last five years of this Sugar Convention which was so actively opposed by the present Government when in opposition? They were told that the Convention would steady the price of sugar and do away with the fluctuations of the market. But the fluctuations, as experts knew, had been, if anything, more, certainly not less, since the Convention. Neither had it attained the much greater prosperity for the West Indies which was claimed for it. At any rate, the production of sugar in the West Indies was less now than before the Convention. He did not say that the West Indies had not got a somewhat higher price for what they had produced. And that brought him to the very unpleasant result that the Convention had had upon this country. Great Britain had paid in the three years immediately following the Convention £6,000,000 more for practically the same amount of sugar than she did in the three years immediately preceding the Convention. No one could deny that the price of sugar in Great Britain had risen considerably, while, by the way, he thought it was also a fact that sugar was cheaper in the other contracting States than it was before the Convention. Then, again, the supervision of sugar factories had cost the country a large annual sum, besides entailing expenses and restrictions on the trade itself, which were so vexatious as to have discouraged all small manufacturers, and tended to give a monopoly to the larger firms. Besides this owing to the prohibition of Russian sugar imposed upon us by the Convention, 50,000 tons of sugar had, in those five years, accumulated in Russia, showing the extent to which we had been robbed of our natural supply. This was the Convention that the Government had renewed for five years, with practically only this modification, that whereas the importation of bounty-fed sugar was prohibited in 1902 it was now to be only limited. It was to be limited not by us, it was true, but by the Convention imposing on Russia a limit to the sugar she might export to us. John was allowed to take as much as he liked from Nicholas; but Nicholas was forbidden to give more than a certain amount to John. The odd thing was that John has agreed to this little arrangement. This agreement, which seemed extraordinary on the face of it, was entered into by the Government when the House was not sitting. The Government acted independently of Parliament. It had not since explained its action, or given any opportunity to the House to discuss, criticise, or ratify. The explanation, therefore, which they would have expected the Government to have given voluntarily had now to be asked for. What explanation and what justification of their action were they going to make to the House to-day? Could they, in the face of the facts which he had given, now say that they were wrong in their opposition to the first Convention, that subsequent events had proved that their forebodings were not justified, that the dire consequences of the Convention had not taken place? They maintained on that side of the House that the results of the Convention had been disastrous to this country. He would not argue that point. Whether they had or had not, need not be considered by them. It was possible that there might be some results to its credit; and it must be remembered that in dealing with the great principle of free trade, they must not allow themselves to consider the effects of isolated cases in trade. To do that would be to fall into the trap of the fair traders; and they should soon find themselves in the protectionist stewpan. After weighing the pros and cons they, as a Party, had chosen the system of free trade; if once they departed from it for any single advantage they should find themselves surrounded by hopeless difficulties. If, however, it was advanced that, had we not agreed to the renewal of the Convention, the other contracting States would have immediately increased their duties on all our sugared products entering their ports, to this they would reply that they could not treat us differently from other countries without violating the most-favoured nation clause. On the other hand, it was quite certain that had we not renewed the Convention, there would have been no need for Russia to have gone on her knees to the Convention and ask to be included. She would have had an open market in Great Britain and would have been independent of the Convention altogether. Would the Government contend, as their predecessors in office before them did, that the Convention abolished bounties in protectionist countries and was therefore favourable to free trade? As a matter of fact, it had not really abolished them all; but that was by the way. They did not assert now, and they never asserted then, that bounties did not belong to the family of protection. Bounties transgressed the principles of free trade, and always harmed the countries who indulged in them. But was it for us to teach other countries their business, more especially when we benefited by their errors? All the same, they would not have objected to the Convention, if that had been all that it contained. Therefore he hoped that the question of bounties would not be put forward to-day in defence of the Convention, as it had nothing whatever to do with their objection. What they objected to was the prohibition of any sugar, as it interfered with our sources and supplies. The Government might say that they had safeguarded free trade and taken the sting out of the adder by eliminating the prohibitionary clause; but could they maintain that when they had agreed to a treaty which, while liberating us from prohibiting bounty-fed sugar, imposed a restriction on Russia with regard to the amount which she might send to this country, and at the end of five years reserved to itself the right to prohibit Russia from sending here any sugar at all if it so pleased? The Foreign Secretary might assert, as he did in answer to a Question put to him the other day, that His Majesty's Government would no longer be required to penalise bounty-fed sugar. Was that not merely half a truth, when practically the same result was obtained by the limitation of Russian exports? Was it not the same evil only wearing another garb? For masterly originality, this verbal quibble, this *est et non est* struck him as difficult to surpass. The Foreign Secretary, when further pressed, then contended that Great Britain was not responsible for this limitation of output. That again was mere hair-splitting. How could Great Britain pretend not to be responsible for any one condition in a treaty of which she had sanctioned the whole? But perhaps the Government would make a clean breast of it, and, while admitting that the renewal could not be justified in the interests of free trade, would say that other and superior considerations had influenced them in the action which they had taken. In this case he thought it would have been better if the Government had taken the House somewhat into its confidence. But the House had had no statement, no explanation. Answers to Questions had been given in as curt a manner as possible. The barest bones of information had been thrown to the House from which they had picked what little comfort they could find on them. Of course, one result of this secrecy on the part of the Government was that all sorts of rumours circulated round the matter. Was the Government, it was asked, failing in its adherence to free trade, and, therefore, was unwilling to face its supporters in the House? For if the renewed Convention was the same as the old one it was protection. If it was different in any way the House would naturally expect to be asked to ratify it as the House was asked to ratify the first Convention in 1903. Then again, it was anxiously questioned, were there international complications on the horizon of which they knew nothing. And was the price we had to pay for the *entente cordiale* an increase of £2,000,000 a year on our sugar bill? Rumours such as these (and he had purposely not recited all of them), could not fail to be injurious to the Government. An explanation was necessary. Some amount of confidence was due to the House. The gravest considerations only could excuse this defection from free trade. It would require a situation almost of national danger to make them abandon such a cherished principle as this. They wanted to be assured that we were not in the grip of foreign financiers and European producers. They wanted to be convinced that over much consideration for friends and fear of imaginary foes had not made the Government tax their own people and rob free trade of its natural fruits. The House was prepared to give a certain amount of blind support to Ministers especially in matters of foreign affairs, but in this instance it felt, he thought, that it had been bounced. He had not brought up this subject to-day without a sense of the gravest possible responsibility. He would perhaps be accused of disloyalty to the Party, but he put free trade before any Party. Were he to be loyal to the Party at the expense of free trade, would he not be like Launcelot, Arthur's friend?—

> "Loyal to Arthur's Queen, but whose honour rooted in dishonour stood, whose faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."

And it was also because of devotion to the party as well as free trade that he took up this position. If there had been a mistake, better, by far, to put their own house in order now, than leave it to be wrecked by others at the general election. Gentlemen opposite had every intention of making protection the one paramount subject, the main issue at the general election. Perhaps he ought not to use the word "protection," but to broaden the basis of taxation was, he believed, the correct phrase. "Broad is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to"—protection. But in any case, whatever name they gave to their fiscal system, their fire would be concentrated on the free trade position. And how were the Liberal Party to keep the citadel when they had voluntarily thrown open the gates to the foe? The President of the Local Government Board, speaking at Oldham last week, said of the Government—

> "They had kept free trade intact, and if they did not keep that position they would not only be unworthy of the confidence of the people, but would deserve to be defeated and rejected when the next general election took place."

He entirely agreed with the last part of his remark. But if this Sugar Convention was still operative at the next general election no man could say that they had kept free trade intact. And every free trader would be compelled to admit that the Labour Party was the only true free trade Party in the country. But he refused to contemplate that possibility. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on 5th August, 1903, said with regard to the first Sugar Convention—

> "The position of the Government is that they have accepted the Convention and can therefore do nothing. I suggest that they should allow the House of Commons to impose its will upon them; they would then be relieved of responsibility, and no blame could be placed upon them by the other contracting parties."

That advice which was given then might be considered now. The Prime Minister could not be held responsible for this "regrettable incident." He did not weave the net in which we found ourselves immeshed. He did not tie the Gordian knot, which if the Government did not undo, would undo the Government, at the general election. He had been the ablest exponent and advocate of free trade throughout the length and breadth of the country, and he knew, no one better, what the betrayal of free trade would mean to Liberalism at the general election. He and his friends therefore appealed to the Prime Minister and appealed confidently to use all the courage and resource of which he was master, even at this late hour, to withdraw Great Britain from the Convention and save the Liberal Party from sure and certain disaster.

*Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said it was five years ago, almost to a month, since his right hon. friend the President of the Board of Trade, standing on the very spot which he occupied, denounced the Brussels Sugar Convention as a working model of protection submitted to this House by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham previous to their being asked to lay down plant upon a larger scale. No one who heard that speech, as he did, would ever forget it. It was, he thought, one of the right hon. Gentleman's happiest efforts. He told the House that the dumping of sugar was an example of dumping *in excelsis*; that large masses of the community were fed on cheap sugar and had been supported and comforted thereby; that the union of sugar with other products in subsidiary industries, was natural, pleasant, profitable, and prolific; and finally he said that any gain to the Empire, or to our West Indian Colonies in particular, would be dearly purchased if it were purchased at the cost of dearer sugar to the consumer at home and cheaper sugar to the consumer abroad. All that line of argument had been summarily set aside by the Government. He had only to ask the House to turn to the Brussels Sugar Convention to which the signature of his right hon. friend had given the authorisation of this country, to see that its primary object, as set forth in the first Article, was the suppression of bounties, and that a Permanent Commission under that Convention was established whose primary duty was to search the globe for the microbe of bounties on sugar. If there were any question on that point it was set at rest by the right hon. Gentleman's own despatch to the British Ambassador at Brussels, in which he said the Government had no desire that there should be a revival of sugar bounties or of sugar trusts, or cartels dependent on the existence of the high tariffs which were now prohibited under the Convention. Therefore the Government had on paper abandoned the position that bounties were a good thing for this country, and had apparently swung half round to the position that they were a bad thing. The essence of our position in the Convention was that we were compelled to participate in a crusade for the putting down of sugar bounties. He did not propose to criticise that position unduly. The President of the Board of Trade once said that every set of circumstances involved every other set of circumstances, and he might apply that by saying that a set of circumstances in Opposition was a different thing from a set of circumstances in office. Putting that on one side, let the House consider the position of this country in the Convention as now modified by the Additional Act. We had agreed to be represented on the Commission, but when it came to a question of the suppression of bounties, all that we were able to say was that we were prepared to receive as much bounty-fed sugar as we could, wherever and whenever we could get it. He thought they were indebted to the Government for introducing a vein of humour into this somewhat ponderous international arrangement. Could the House imagine anything more humorous than for this country to say to the sugar-producing countries of the Continent, "Yes, we are with you in your desire to suppress bounties. We shall go upon the Permanent Commission and pay our due share of the expenses, and we shall receive from our delegate the reports which the Commission collects upon the various fiscal systems of the sugar-producing countries of the globe. But when you ask us to penalise or prohibit this bounty-fed sugar, we join issue, and say the severest punishment we can inflict is to admit as much of it as we can get." It was as though one were to join a syndicate of detectives for searching out burglars, and when they had been detected, solemnly to inform one's colleagues that the only thing one could do by way of punishment was to become the receiver of the stolen goods. Of course, the sugar-producing countries did not take this action of the Government lying down. They were in rather a delicate position, because, while passing a self-denying ordinance, to which we were parties, that they would not impose a surtax beyond six francs a ton on sugar, they found that we were prepared to admit any country that was able with bounty-fed sugar to raid the English market. Germany looked round, and found that the really serious potential competitor in bounty-fed sugar was Russia. There were great possibilities of sugar cultivation in that country. Labour was cheaper than in Germany, and it was difficult to say to what extent Russia might have gone had she been left free to pour into the English market all the bounty-fed sugar she could produce. Russia, as a matter of fact, had always denied that she was a bounty giver; but the Commission, which was the only judge, decided in solemn conclave that Russia was a bounty-giving country. It was, therefore, essential that the sugar-producing members of the Convention should disarm Russia as far as possible. In fact, their policy, stimulated by our attitude, was to secure that outside the Convention there should be as few potential burglars of the English market as possible, and as Russia was the chief cause of suspicion German efforts were directed to securing the restriction of her export. He supposed they would never know what were the arguments that were brought to bear on Russia to induce her to restrict her export. They did know the menaces that were addressed by the German delegate to the Commission, who plainly said that his country would not ratify the Additional Act unless Russia were included; and if the Convention were not ratified he hinted, if he did not threaten, that the surtax would be revived, that bounties would again be imposed, and that cheap sugar would be dumped upon this country. He did not know what effect that had on the mind of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs but he adopted the attitude that this was a matter between the sugar-producing countries and Russia, and one with which we had no concern. Yet it was our action, and our action alone, in continuing members of the Convention, while deciding to take bounty-fed sugar wherever we could get it, which impelled the sugar-producing countries to secure the burglars and turn them into policemen as rapidly as possible. Our delegate at Brussels, Sir Henry Bergne, must surely have found himself in an extraordinary position. He was *vis-a-vis* with the sugar-producing States of the Continent, whose desire was to suppress bounty-fed sugar, and he represented a country which said to them, "We are with you up to a point, but we wish to receive the thing which you desire to destroy." Costa Rica had bounties, but exported no sugar; and therefore, it was suggested that the countervailing duties might be taken off, and our delegate naturally supported that view. But he was in a minority on a division. Again, Russia wanted to get through the restriction of her export, and, when prices in England were high, to send something in excess of her maximum. That was warmly supported by our delegate, but he was again left in a minority. Finally, Italy, fired by the example of Russia, thought it was a good opportunity for her to get a little liberty in the matter of export, even though she did give bounties, and demanded that she should be allowed to export 15,000 tons annually, the bulk of which would have come to this country. Again, Sir Henry Bergne supported the demand, and again he was left in a minority. Did not all that go to show that our delegate was suspect in the eyes of the other members of the Commission? Looking ahead, the liberty given under the Convention to this country to import bounty-fed sugar was somewhat illusory. In plain language, what it meant was at the moment, now that Russia had been restricted, there were no possible competitors to the contracting States to the Convention in bounty-fed sugar, and, therefore, our liberty was not of much advantage. But he would like to know from the Foreign Secretary what was going to happen in the next few years if a serious competitor to these great Continental States in bounty-fed sugar did arise? They would have these States appealing to this country against the English market being raided by some great competitor in bounty-fed sugar while they were tied up under this self-denying ordinance. If that situation arose, one of two things would happen — either this country would be again compelled to prohibit bounty fed sugar, or the Convention would summarily explode by mere force of circumstances. Perhaps the Convention would go. They did not know what Government might be in office, but he saw that there was power of denunciation in three years by a majority vote. He was inclined to think that that had been inserted by the contracting States in view of the possibility that he was now contemplating. But if the present Government were in power, he presumed that they would adhere to the policy of not penalising bounty-fed sugar, and therefore this raiding of the English market would probably lead to the final extinction of the Convention. If hon. Gentlemen opposite came into power they could not put in force the prohibition of bounty-fed sugar. They were tied up. Let the House consider the position. If they came into power, they would come pledged not to suppress bounties but to give bounties. If they were true to their professions, if they were not going to lose themselves in this vague phraseology about broadening the basis of taxation, they would come into power pledged to set up a great Imperial wheat syndicate for artificially stimulating wheat cultivation in countries flying the British flag. That could be done by indirect bounties. The preferential tariff of hon. Gentlemen opposite was an indirect bounty to the wheat-growing countries of the British Empire. The preferences would be as truly bounties as those now given on sugar by the contracting States to this Convention. Whatever might be the hardihood of hon. Gentlemen opposite or the depths of casuistry to which politicians sometimes descended, he could not conceive that at the moment they were setting up a system of bounties for the artificial cultivation of wheat in the British Empire, they would at the same time have the audacity to join in suppressing by international sanction the giving of bounties on sugar. No, the hands of hon. Gentlemen opposite were tied. They were bounty givers, not bounty suppressers, and it would be impossible for them to arrive at an international sugar Convention unless at the same time they were prepared to join an international wheat Convention for suppressing bounties on wheat. He took it that they might assume that His Majesty's Government would be the only Government with clean hands in this matter. He thought that some day they might again have to contemplate the prohibition of bounty-fed sugar. He stood there as an anxious inquirer. He hoped his right hon. friend would be able to convince his Party that this Convention was strictly in accordance with free trade principles. Five years ago, in his unregenerate days, he voted for it as a Unionist, because he thought that free trade arguments were not all on one side. He had progressed since those days, and he desired to apply free trade all round, in every department, as far as possible, of State policy. It would be indeed bewildering and disconcerting to him if he felt that the principles of the Liberal Party were eluding him almost at the first moment. Therefore, he hoped that his right hon. friend would be able to show not only that their judgment was unimpaired and their sense of humour intact, but also that they would not violate their free trade principles.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I have listened with great interest to the speech which my hon. friend has just made, and I could not help feeling, in listening, that the cause of free trade suffers nothing in his hands, and his advocacy of it is not the less effective from the fact that he has thoroughly studied both sides of the question. I believe that we all recognise that in him we have one of the staunchest and one of the most effective supporters of free trade principles which are universal on this side of the House. A good deal, or something, of what he said, was on the lines which the Government have taken with regard to this Convention. He emphasised the large amount of liberty, of complete liberty, which we have with regard to receiving bounty-fed sugar in our ports. That in itself differentiates the Convention in its modified form from the Convention as it was before the change was introduced into it. The two Conventions are technically the same; the one is merely an alteration of the other; but, as a matter of fact, the arguments which apply to the denunciation of the old Convention are almost all of them met by the alterations which have been introduced into the present Convention—I mean the arguments such as were used by the hon. Member for Brighton, who introduced the subject to the House. When in Opposition, I constantly urged that one of the most forcible objections to the measures brought forward by the party opposite when in power, with which we disagreed, was that you cannot make things which have been once done as if they had not been done, and to undo a thing is not the same as never to do it at all. That is the position in which the Government found itself in regard to the Sugar Convention. To denounce a Convention into which this country has entered, and on the faith of which other nations have made arrangements in agreement with this country, is not the same thing as to refuse to enter into a Convention which has never existed. We were placed in the exceedingly difficult position of holding with regard to the Sugar Convention fixed principles differing from those of the Government in power when the Convention was made. But we were also bound to consider that certain engagements had been taken with regard to foreign countries, and that put upon us the very difficult task of reconciling our own fiscal principles with what we might consider the moral claims which other countries brought forward in consequence of the previous action of this country. The line we took was this—that the Convention as it existed was one which we could not continue, and one which we must denounce at the earliest possible moment. The hon. Member for Brighton said that it could be denounced from year to year. It could not be denounced from year to year. We announced our intention to denounce the Convention at the earliest possible moment at which it could be done. What was the effect of that? Other countries, in a perfectly courteous way, not even by official representatives, but in a perfectly clear way, did make it known to us that our denunciation of the Convention at the earliest possible moment was meting out rather hard treatment to them, and putting them to considerable inconvenience. Their point was that the British Government had taken a leading part in inducing them to enter into the Convention; that in entering into that Convention they had entirely to remodel their own fiscal system; they had altered their duties, abolished their bounties, got rid of their cartels, got rid of their old complicated system, which they had endured for many years and had built up with a great deal of ingenuity and trouble, and embarked on an entirely new fiscal system which had then lasted for four years, and they had done that in some instances, it is not too much to say, under pressure from this country. Then they said to us, "You, the British Government, Great Britain, having done this, now at the earliest possible moment, are going to upset the whole arrangement made, and put us to the exceeding inconvenience of having to reconsider the whole position which you yourselves were in the first instance one of the most influential in bringing about." That would not have weighed with us as against the economic interests of this country, if we considered them seriously involved, and we held to our position that if the old Convention was to stand we must denounce it at the earliest possible moment. What we said in effect was this, that the economic interests of this country were in our view so bound up with having complete liberty to import sugar at our own ports, that we could not compromise that liberty of ours so far as our own action was concerned, even to suit the convenience of other countries with whom we had entered into these arrangements.

previously. But the one assumption which underlay the speeches of both hon. Members who have spoken is not, I think, true. It is that if we had broken up this Convention and given no opportunity for modification of it, but left the Convention entirely, there would have been a reversion to the old state of things, which they consider was very beneficial to this country. But that is just what I mean by saying that you cannot make a thing done once as if it had never been done at all. There would not have been, in my opinion, a reversion to the old state of things. Other countries had already begun to consider what the position would be if we denounced the Convention, and undoubtedly they would have made an attempt, and in my opinion a successful attempt, to continue the Convention without us. They were not anxious to go back to that complicated system of bounties if they could avoid it. They would have tried to avoid it, but, in my opinion they would have done it by continuing the Convention without us, and also by bringing Russia into the Convention. What would have happened would have been the continuance of that Convention with Russia a party to it, and possibly other States. Anyhow, the Convention would have been continued without us, and it would have been a condition of the Convention into which they must have entered that they would impose either prohibition or retaliatory duties on sugar exports from this country. The hon. Member for Brighton said that they could not do that because of the most-favoured nation clause. That clause is constantly being made the subject of disputed interpretation. We always put the widest interpretation upon it. It would have been contended that it was not a violation of the most favoured nation clause to place retaliatory duties on bounty fed sugar, and you would undoubtedly have had this, that not only would the Convention have been continued without us, but it would have been continued in such a form that the other countries would impose retaliatory duties on British sugar products. I do not know that the British sugar trade is very much afraid even of that: but it is at any rate an open question whether it would not have inflicted some damage on this country. People sometimes do not like a thing when they get to close quarters with it as much as they thought. But this much is certain, that even if the economic effect was doubtful, the political effect would have been prejudicial. You could not have had other countries entering into a Convention to place surtax on, or to prohibit British goods altogether, without its having more than economic consequencies. It would undoubtedly have different consequences upon the political atmosphere, and although I do not go so far as to say that that in itself would have been made by us or other nations a cause of quarrel, yet undoubtedly it would have created that spirit of unfavourable friction which does adversely affect the political atmosphere, and makes international relations more difficult than they otherwise would be. That I feel certain would have been the consequence. We have never yet come to the position in which other countries have not given us the advantages of the most favoured nation clause. We have never yet come to the position that another country has definitely imposed heavier duties on British goods than any others. We have never been singled out for specially heavy duties. If that time ever does come it is only within reason to conclude that it must have an adverse effect upon our political relations with other countries. Tariff walls always affect international relations. I remember talking with a distinguished free trader years ago, and when asked what he would do in case another country unfairly selected British goods for specially high duties which she did not impose on any other goods, he said "I should use the Fleet." I do not believe an economic question of that kind is ever going to be carried to that length between us and another country, but there would be considerable political feeling, constant questions in the House, and complaints from the trade. If I were, in such circumstances, pressed to make diplomatic representations to Continental countries with a view of getting the duties placed on our goods lowered, and if I did make those representations, they would not be so smooth as to improve the relations between the countries concerned. In spite of that we were prepared to denounce the Convention.

Sir Edward Grey.

Why? Because our real objection to the Convention on this side of the House was the penal clause. The hon. Member for Brighton complained that we had not taken the House into our confidence. A year ago—on June 6—we announced to the House that if we should be freed from the penal clause we were prepared to continue parties to the Convention, and as far as I know that announcement met with no objection in any quarter of the House. There were ample opportunities for discussing that announcement of policy. Having made that announcement, we proceeded with the policy. Opportunities for debate there were on the Address when the House met; and I did my utmost to get the ratification of the Convention delayed for some days, at any rate, after the House met, and it was done, and there could have been a debate upon the Address. As far as as giving information is concerned, I published Papers at the earliest possible moment, and when Questions have been asked I have done my best to give all the information that could be given within the limits of an Answer. If there has not been more discussion in the House it arises solely from this, that, with the great pressure on the time of the House, it is exceedingly difficult for a day to be given to discuss everything in which various members are interested. If at the Foreign Office we had constantly to wait till discussion has taken place in the House, public business would be hopelessly impeded. I am sure the Prime Minsiter is anxious to give every opportunity for discussion, but the House must realise, looking back on the course of business this Session, how exceedingly difficult it would have been, even if he had been pressed, which I do not think he was, to select a day especially for the discussion of the question. I think it would not have been courteous to other nations to refuse to discuss with them the continuation of the Convention, provided they were willing to agree that we should be freed from the obligations of the penal clause. If, when they had shown themselves willing so to free us and had agreed to our throwing open our ports as freely as before to the importation of sugar, we had said: "We will not listen to you, we shall still denounce the Convention as it stands," I think it would have been difficult to persuade them that the line we were taking was reaonsable or really required by our own interests. They were ready to remove our great objection to the whole Convention, and if that objection was removed it was only reasonable that we should meet them by continuing parties to the remainder. We accordingly agreed. They made it a condition of continuing the Convention themselves that Russia should join the Convention. Previously Great Britain had taken rather a pronounced line with regard to Russian bounties, and had not been willing that Russia with her present fiscal system should be a party to the Convention. But now, when we were no longer going to penalise bounty-fed sugar, and our ports were opened, and we were not bound by the penal clause, there was obviously no reason why we should make any difficulty about the Russian fiscal system. We said we should be very glad if Russia were to join the Convention. But the other Powers were aware of the risk to which this would expose them in our market, and they said that either the Russian fiscal system must be altered or some arrangement must be come to with regard to the limitation of the export of Russian sugar. What was our attitude with regard to that? If they had said that we must be parties to that arrangement to this extent, that we must take upon ourselves our share of the responsibility of seeing that limitation enforced upon Russia, and if need be we must be prepared at our ports to stop Russian sugar and make ourselves responsible for carrying out that arrangement, I do not think we should have agreed. From the beginning, to be free at our own ports was a *sine qua non* of continuing the Convention, and we expressed the opinion that as far as we were concerned we would much prefer any other arrangements to be made between Russia and other sugar-producing countries. As we were not going to be a party to this particular arrangement or to accept responsibility for it, it was out of our power to influence it. Russia made that arrangement. In my opinion she would have made that arrangement if we had left the Convention altogether. It was not our staying in the Convention that induced Russia to make that arrangement. Our ports are open now; so would they have been if we had left the Convention. There is nothing in our action that has influenced Russia to come to this arrangement. If she has made it whilst we are a party to the present Convention, with our ports open, so she would have made it equally if we had left the Convention and had our ports open. The reasons that induced Russia to enter into an arrangement with other Powers would have been equally strong whether we remained in the Convention or not. We are still under the old Convention. The modifications do not come into force till 1st September next. On 1st September next Russia will be able to export, if she desires, 300,000 tons of sugar, besides what she may export to Finland, Persia, and some neighbouring Asiatic countries by land. After that she will be able to export some 200,000 tons every year. It is said that she has now 500,000 tons in stock, and that, therefore, the price of sugar is very adversely affected by the limitation of the Russian export of that stock. But that stock is an accumulation of some years. It is the fact that that stock was there which made Germany so anxious in regard to its dispersal. Germany would have forced Russia into this arrangement equally whether we were parties to the Convention or not. An arrangement between Russia and Germany in my opinion is and always was outside our control. [An Hon. Member: How did Germany force Russia?] As we were not parties to the negotiations about the limitation of export, it is difficult for me to say what the Russian reasons were, but I imagine the reasons would be that Continental countries, including Russia, were so anxious that there should be no return to competition between themselves under the old bounty system, that Germany would have used the lever of the competition of the old bounty system, which in Germany's hands was exceedingly powerful, to press Russia to come into this arrangement in order to prevent Russian sugar being exposed to the competition of German bounty-fed sugar. That is what I meant when I said the Convention would have been continued even if we had left it. The argument from Germany to Russia would have been as strong in its effect on Russia whether we had remained parties to the Convention or not.

Earl PERCY (Kensington, S.): How would the German Government give bounties whilst remaining parties to the Convention?

Sir EDWARD GREY: Let me assume that we had denounced the Convention and were outside it altogether. What I conceive would have happened would be this. Germany would have said to Russia: "Unless you will come into this Convention which we are going to continue without Great Britain, we, Germany, will re-establish our bounty system and there will be no Convention at all. But you, Russia, will suffer, because the German bounties so re-established will be so powerful that Russian sugar will not be able to compete in the open market with German sugar." The result of the pressure upon Russia would have been—as it has been—that the Convention would have been continued. My point is that the Convention would have gone on, not because Germany established bounties, but because other countries were afraid she would. What is the actual effect likely to be? For the moment, out of 500,000 tons you can only have 300,000 tons exported. What I look at is the general level of the price and not the oscillations. If you have 500,000 tons placed upon the market at once, of course you will have a considerable fall in prices for the moment, and you will have a rise in prices afterwards. Russia can send 300,000 tons, and afterwards 200,000 tons. There must be borne in mind this consideration—that for some ten years before there was any Convention at all the average annual export of Russian sugar to this country was about 40,000 tons. Now she will be able to export up to 200,000 tons in any one year. The question whether this limitation of Russian exports is likely to have any effect on the permanent price during the next five years depends on whether you think it probable that Russia, who only exported 40,000 tons to us before there was any Convention, has now developed her sugar industry to such an extent that she will want to export 200,000 tons. In my opinion, the economic effect taken over the five years must be infinitesimal when the consideration is put, as it was, in this way: The average annual export of Russian sugar used to be 40,000 tons; she will now be able to export 200,000 tons; do you consider the economic effect of that arrangement so grave and serious to the interests of this country as to nullify the great advantage you have gained in freeing yourselves from obligations and opening your ports to the whole world, and in having avoided a situation which would have made it incumbent on you to have an economic rupture with foreign countries, with the possibility of the Convention being continued without you with hostile tariffs? I do not believe that any reasonable man would say that the probability of the economic effect of the limitation to 200,000 tons when Russia was in previous years in the habit of sending an average of only 40,000 tons—I do not believe any reasonable man would say that we should have made that a reason for breaking off the Convention altogether. With regard to Italy, the British delegate was in a minority on the Commission, and although he advocated that the other countries should agree that Italy should be allowed to export sugar, he was outvoted, and she was not allowed to export. The remedy is in her own hands. She need not become a party to the Convention, and she could send us as much sugar as she wished to send. While we are on the Convention we shall use our influence to secure the greatest liberty both in the export and the import of sugar. One of the objects of the Convention is to keep down restrictive duties and thus prevent bounties. My hon. friend says that, as free traders, we ought not to bother about bounties; but we are entitled to attend to matters which tend to restrictive duties. Well now, Sir, on the Convention our delegate will, as in the case of Italy, advocate that there should be on the part of other Powers the greatest freedom of export and import; but if he does not carry his way on the Convention it does not matter to us. Our ports remain open, and if Italy cannot get all that she desires, she is just as free to send sugar to us, if she pleases, because her ports are not restricted, neither are ours. The real objection to the Convention, as I have said, is the penal clause. It was this, that we were one country—one consumer, with a number of producers in the majority who might form a ring and outvote us, and might oblige us to close our ports, first to one country and then to another. Under the old Convention we might one year be able to import sugar from Brazil. The next year it might be decided that Brazil gave a bounty, and it might be demanded that we should close our ports to Brazilian sugar. That, in my opinion, was always the great drawback to the Convention. The decision as to what were bounties and what were not rested with the producing countries who were in the majority. It was to their interest to put the widest construction on bounties and to our interest to put the narrowest, and gradually the net might be drawn closer and closer round us, and we might be bound to close our ports more and more to the sugar of other countries, being overruled by the majority on the Convention. Under the modified Convention that danger is entirely gone. We cannot now be asked to close our ports at any time. We know exactly where we are as long as the agreement between Russia and other countries holds good. With regard to the whole world, whatever the Convention may do, it has put us in a position of freedom, and it cannot impose on us the obligation to close our ports to sugar from whatever quarter it comes. I maintain that the Government have secured the freedom and liberty of this country. We could not have prevented, in my opinion, the arrangement Russia has come to with other countries if we wished. We could not have prevented the Convention being continued without us and on terms far more unfavourable to us. So far from thinking that we have sacrificed the interests of this country, I think the Government have surveyed and considered the whole situation, not only the economic, but the political situation involved, and they deserve some credit for having secured the liberty we have with regard to the import of sugar, and for having secured it without an economic rupture with other countries.

EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.) said it was impossible not to feel a certain amount of sympathy with the disappointment and mortification of the supporters of the Government who had raised this question. Personally he regretted that this protest came much too late to have any effect in securing the modification of the policy which the Government had adopted. The Convention was signed and concluded at a time when it was impossible for this House to discuss the question.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It had to come before the House to be ratified.

EARL PERCY said that they had no opportunity of raising the question in a concrete form. So far as the other side of the House was concerned they had had no effective opportunity of registering a protest against this policy. Although he did not suggest, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested in connection with the Budget, that this was one of those happy accidents which only occurred when a Liberal Government was in office, if they had acted in similar circumstances as the Government had acted he felt sure they would have had no sterner critics than the right hon. Baronet and his colleagues. However that might be, this fact clearly emerged, that the supporters of the Government had been very badly served, and it was impossible by any dialectical ingenuity to conceal the fact that the course the Government actually adopted was the exact reverse of that which they told the country they would adopt at the last election. If words, speeches, and votes in this House registered not only before the election but when the Party opposite were in opposition counted for anything at all, they meant clearly that the Government were absolutely pledged to avail themselves of the earliest opportunity which arose to withdraw altogether from any participation in this Convention. But instead of doing that the Government had not only remained in the Convention, but they had taken special steps to secure that neither they nor any successive Government should have the power to sever themselves from it for at least five years to come. Of that remarkable *volte face* the right hon. Baronet had offered to the House two explanations. In the first place he said that although the Government remained parties to this Convention they did so under conditions supposed to be different from the original conditions, and modified to such an extent that they removed the objections formerly entertained to the Convention. What was the precise scope of the change which had been introduced by His Majesty's Government? All that they had done was to announce to the world that they did not feel themselves compelled by any obligation to impose countervailing duties or to prohibit the entry of bounty-fed sugar, having previously informed themselves that there was practically no opportunity of imposing that restrictive policy. That might be common sense, but he did not think it was an act which entitled them to any special credit. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out that the amount of Russian sugar which Russia was to be allowed to export under the Convention was still considerably in excess of the amount which she had exported in previous years. He had no doubt that that was perfectly true, but that was not an effect for which the Government had any right to take any credit to themselves. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out that that was the result of an arrangement between Germany and Russia to which the Government were not parties.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I did not take any credit for it. All I said was that I did not think we deserved any blame for it.

EARL PERCY said he did not think this was open to the objection urged on the other side of the House, because it had not materially restricted the export of Russian sugar. The limitation to be placed upon the amount of sugar which Russia might export was a matter of private arrangement with which they had no concern and in regard to which they did not consider they had any right. They did not make any representation, and Germany might have insisted on the Russians not exporting any bounty-fed sugar at all, and this country would still have felt itself bound to acquiesce. The very fact that Germany acquiesced in the export of this amount of bounty-fed sugar showed how completely illusory were the advantages which had been claimed. It was matter of common knowledge that, in entering into agreement with Germany, the object was to prevent the effective competition of Russian bounty-fed sugar with German sugar in the British market; therefore, as the net result of the new arrangement, the only conditions on which we were to receive Russian sugar were conditions under which the British consumer would get no benefit in the shape of reduction in price. If that were not the case the Government would have landed themselves in a position difficult to defend; they would have announced to all Europe that they were going to allow Russian bounty-fed sugar to enter the British market and to compete with sugar imported from our Colonies at the very time when they were binding themselves by the Convention not to allow their Crown Colony Governments to give to their own sugar the bounties Russia might give to hers. It would have been a curious conclusion to have been come to by a Government whose primary objection to the Convention was that it placed the economic policy of the country under foreign dictation. The Colonies might or might not be entitled to claim preference in the British market—that was matter of opinion—but at least it would be agreed that they were entitled to equal treatment with foreign countries. That would not have been the case under the hypothesis he was considering. In the position that would arise if the Colonial sugar-producing industries were seriously jeopardised by the importation of bounty-fed sugar from Russia, the claim of the Colonies for reimposition of very considerable countervailing duties on Russian sugar to re-establish equal conditions would be so conclusive that it would be impossible to resist it. He wished to repeat a question he had raised before—whether, as a result of the new arrangement, Russia would remove the penal rate imposed on Indian tea coming by the Black Sea route?

SIR EDWARD GREY said he understood that that would be done. If the noble Lord would put a Question on the Paper he would answer it fully.

EARL PERCY said that if that was so it was a very gratifying announcement; and he hoped they would hear no more of the impossibility of success attending a retaliatory policy. At all events, a retaliatory policy exercised by a foreign Government against a British Government with the Liberal Party in power had been attended by complete and brilliant success. Russia obtained everything she wanted. So far as he could gather, no representation on the treatment of Indian tea was addressed to Russia until the subject was raised by his Question in the House. If that was so, he hoped it would dispel the illusion of the free traders that with their party was special solicitude for the financial interests of our great Eastern dependency. There was only one other defence of their policy offered by his Majesty's Government, that their hands were tied by the action of their predecessors—a similar argument had been heard about Chinese labour—that they could not withdraw from the Convention without causing very serious inconvenience to the other Powers who were parties. That would seem to be complete and adequate, and he did not see why right hon. Gentlemen should not have been content with it. What a pity they did not recognise this obvious consideration before they made those speeches which had excited expectations and given them no little electoral advantage in the country. The authors of the Convention, believing it to have been completely justified, hailed His Majesty's Government as tardy converts to at all events some of the merits of that Convention, for he understood the right hon. Gentleman did not desire, if he could get it, the re-establishment of bounties; he recognised that the sudden dumping of an enormous quantity of foreign produce in the British market could at the best be but a temporary advantage in the shape of cheapness. Hailing His Majesty's Government as unwilling converts to the Convention they formerly fiercely denounced, he congratulated them upon having on this occasion framed a policy to square not only with electoral pledges given with all the irresponsibility of opposition, but in accordance with what they now deemed the true interest of the country in the light of that fuller knowledge that beat on the Treasury Bench. He hoped there might be fresh illustrations of the same spirit in the future. If the present question were to be pressed to a division, he should without hesitation support the policy of the Government.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.) said that his hon. friend the Member for the East Toxteth Division of Liverpool had remarked that there was a certain vein of humour in the situation. It was the most humorous situation, from the political point of view, in which he had ever been involved. Six years ago when he sat in opposition they made a great fight for the cause of free trade, and although there were many vague questions raised in the course of their long discussions, there was one point on which by common consent they all came to an agreement—that they ought to fight the Brussels Convention with every Parliamentary weapon that could be brought against it. They opposed the First and Second Readings, they convinced the whole Liberal Party in regard to that policy, and they pledged themselves even after the Convention had been set up and after the Bill had become law to denounce the Convention at the earliest possible opportunity. There were now twenty gentlemen on the Treasury Bench who gave that pledge. The position was all the more humorous now that Liberals were transferred to that side of the House. What were they to do? No one was bound more than he was by feelings of allegiance and affection to the Government, and yet he had to decide between adherence to those feelings of devotion towards which most honest Members of Parliament leaned and turning his back on the principles which he had advocated for ten long years in this House. That was the dilemma in which he was placed, and there was only one choice open to him, and that was to say that he had changed none of his opinions, and nothing which he had heard from his right hon. friend had convinced him that the step he defended was a wise step. He had the greatest admiration for the right hon. Gentleman's position. The right hon. Gentleman had never acted with those who fought against the Convention at the time it was entered into. He had no reflection to cast on the right hon. Gentleman, but he wished to know what was the position of his nineteen or twenty colleagues. It was a great triumph for the Foreign Secretary that they had been unanimous in the policy presented in his speech that day. The right hon. Gentleman said they all thought the position perfectly consistent. After all, he could only say that in his opinion it was perfectly consistent. There might be room for another opinion. The right hon. Gentleman's defence of the position of the Government was a remarkably simple one; he said the objection they formed to the Sugar Convention was all united in the objection to the penal clause. He entirely denied that. The Convention contained twelve clauses, and from the first word to the last it was a document hateful to every free trader. Therefore, when the right hon. Gentleman said: "I will take this picture, I will make it better, and then you will like it," he would not carry the free traders in the House with him. The first clause of the Convention said that all members of the Convention bound themselves together to suppress all direct and indirect bounties which stimulated the production or importation of sugar. That was a very wide principle for the friends of free trade to assent to. The Convention gave a very wide definition of what bounties were, and one which free traders could not accept at all. If the definition in the Convention was to be regarded as a true description of bounties, there had been bounties given on Irish tobacco in recent years. According to the definition, he did not think the hands of the Chief Secretary for Ireland were perfectly clean. The case put for the Sugar Convention was that it was an instrument for purifying business. The right hon. Gentleman meant well by his declaration as to the first clause, but there never was a more preposterous contention made about any document than that. Then Clause 3 set up a surtax. A surtax existed in a country where a Customs duty was twice as high as the Excise duty. It was a purely protectionist arrangement; and for a free trade Government to set up a surtax was too absurd. Again, all the negotiations regarding the most intimate trade relations of this country were carried on in secret. He would examine the negotiations carried on with Russia as set forth in the White Paper. By the way, it was hard to read anything in a White Paper, but the White Paper about the Sugar Convention surpassed all other Government documents in its unintelligibility and everything that irritated the human mind. In the first place, it was printed in two languages, and the language they did not understand was put first. In the second place, everything was repeated *ad nauseam*, especially the names of the distinguished individuals who signed the Convention. A great part of the business seemed to be getting the signatures of all the representatives of the Powers, whose titles sometimes extended to half a page. He had had to go through all those documents and try to get a grain of sense out of them, at the bottom, and had suffered accordingly. The discussion on the Russian tea duty went on for fourteen days, and no man could pierce the mystery of what happened during that period. What would he not give for a verbatim report of those discussions in order to see what inducements had been held out to Russia to limit the supply of one of the commodities which were a necessary of life, to the United Kingdom. His right hon. friend had told the House what he thought Russia said, but what he would like to know was what she really did say in those discussions. But no light was thrown upon them; they were conducted in secrecy, and the result was that our trade was so handled that our food was dearer and the necessary raw material of some of our important manufactures was cut off from us. There was another point. A feature of English law, which they all praised as the chief security of our liberty, was that an accused person should be heard in his own behalf before being condemned. Nobody who was charged before this secret tribunal with giving a bounty on sugar was afforded an opportunity of stating his case. It was more autocratic than a Russian tribunal. They received what information they liked and then pronounced their decision. His right hon. friend had accepted on behalf of this strong nation the principle that whatever this Special Commission of the Convention declared to be true was true, and that whatever sentence they pronounced should be carried out for ever. He held that this autocratic feature of the Convention was most objectionable. His right hon. friend said that bounties were abolished by the Convention; but would the House believe it, under Clause 6 bounties were expressly recognised? It did not try to set up a pure system of trading, but exempted certain countries—Spain, Denmark, and Italy—to which its provisions were not to apply. He had only examined the terms of the Convention in order to show that the whole framework of the document was hateful to the free trade mind. He did not object to the right hon. Gentleman's position. He objected to the policy of the Government; this instrument was the working model of their policy; and it was not a pleasant thing for free traders to contemplate. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman was not justified in saying that all would be well with free trade since the first Convention had been altered. The right hon. Gentleman said that he had got rid of the penal clause; but that was too strong a statement to make. He had only substituted one penal clause for another, for if the penal clause had been absolutely got rid of the Convention itself would go. There must be some means of enforcing the Convention, and therefore the right hon. Gentleman found himself compelled to substitute another clause for the penal clause by which he was bound before. The right hon. Gentleman was not the first statesman who had got into trouble over this matter. When the first attempt was made to carry out the Convention countervailing duties were proposed, but these were not accepted and the late Government adopted prohibition instead. Now the right hon. Gentleman had abandoned prohibition and adopted a third expedient—that was that every exporter of sugar, and he believed the term included sugar products——

SIR EDWARD GREY: No.

MR. LOUGH said he noticed that the British delegate made a statement to the Convention that he would not agree to sugar products being included; but that statement should have been included in the protocol so that our traders might know how they actually stood. He maintained that as the Convention now stood it included sugar products. What would happen whenever a merchant went into the market to buy? He would find that one class of goods was tainted and the other free. In the case of tainted products the price would go down. He put it from the free trade point of view. Why should a Government which claimed to be a free trade Government subject our exporters to any restriction of that kind? The right hon. Gentleman had said that if they did not do this our goods would be penalised. Well, for a long time we had no Brussels Convention and our exports got on wonderfully well. The free trade policy went on well and we should have done well to have stuck to it. He contended that it was not fair to say that the penal clause was got rid of by substituting another which was uncertain in its operation as regarded sugar products.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It is clearly understood that it did not apply to sugar products; that sugar products are not included; and the hon. Member is not justified in saying that they are.

MR. LOUGH said he accepted the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman with the greatest gratitude; it was of the utmost importance. He had been only surveying the penal clause which had been substituted for the original penal clause. What was the right hon. Gentleman's defence? It was that he had opened our ports and that no sugar could any longer be excluded from this country. On 1st August last the right hon. Gentleman, in replying to the hon. Member for Dulwich, said that the Convention had not the power to put any restriction on the amount of sugar that came to this market. But the Government had found that they were unable to keep that pledge, for within eight days Germany said that they would not come in on those terms. So that this country was in the unhappy position of having to go hat in hand to Germany. That afternoon the right hon. Gentleman had said repeatedly that under the new Convention all the various parties which came into the Convention were agreed that in future our ports should be open and facilities given for getting in a full supply of sugar.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I did not say that; I said that we secured it for ourselves.

MR. LOUGH said he was glad to hear that the Government had secured it for themselves. Germany said she would not have it and there must be another Convention. That new Convention met in November, so that the statement made in August was premature, inaccurate, at least not a full statement, and they did not get the story of what took place at the November Convention until February. What really took place in November was a secret; but in February it was announced that only 300,000 tons of sugar could be sent into this country, and only 1,000,000 tons during the next six years. He was sorry to see that statement. That was not enough. How did the right hon. Gentleman know how much sugar would be demanded by this country? Had the right hon. Gentleman fathomed the resources of British Commerce? They wanted a little more than that. This was all protection. The right hon. Gentleman said that we lost nothing; that we got 300,000 tons on 1st September. Let him tell the House how the price of the commodity moved as these negotiations went on. On 1st September when the right hon. Gentleman said that our ports were open, the price of sugar was 9s. 10d. per cwt., but in the course of the next three or four months it went steadily down to 9s. 3d. per cwt. That showed that the casual statement of the right hon. Gentleman was not well founded, when he declared that if the ports were fully opened on 1st September it would have no effect. But after the Convention met in November, the price of sugar went up 6d., then 1s., and finally nearly 2s. per cwt. And every shilling of rise in the price meant a tax of £2,000,000 for the unhappy people who used sugar in this country. This showed how delicate this problem was. The poor merchants wanted this sugar and suddenly they found their affairs were being managed for them by the right hon. Gentleman who attended to the foreign affairs of this country, and every turn which he gave to the screw cost the people another million of money. The right hon. Gentleman should have instructed our delegate on the Convention to say: "You have broken your pledges, our ports are not open. The bargain is off," and the Convention would dissolve. That was his opinion. We were still supporting the Convention, and the right hon. Gentleman did not know what the position under the Convention was. We did not in this country produce one pound of beet sugar, but we used 2,000,000 tons. We took one-third of the entire product of the Continent. We used more German beet sugar than was used by Germany itself, and yet we allowed Germany to go into a Convention for the purpose of regulating the price which we should pay for her product. The right hon. Gentleman had said it would be very inconvenient to Germany if we were to withdraw from the Convention. It certainly would. Germany would lose from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 a year on her sugar. And so, in order not to inconvenience these foreign Powers, we remained in. Yes, but what in that case became of the Liberal argument against Colonial preference? If he had to choose—which he never would, because he would stick to free trade—between giving a preference to Canada and Australia, the daughter States as they were called, or to France and Germany, he would most certainly prefer the Colonies, because, after all, blood was thicker than water. But the Liberal Party had said with regard to preference that, much as they loved the Colonies, they could not violate the integrity of their free trade principles. When, however, it was the case of France and Germany, we were obliged to concede the point. The right hon. Gentleman said it was much easier to do a wrong thing than to undo it. He agreed with every word, but a strong Government ought to be able to accomplish great tasks. The election had been fought on free trade, the Government were pledged to free trade, and it would be better, far, to attempt to fulfil their pledges to the country than to try and escape in the way the right hon. Gentleman had done. In September, the right hon. Gentleman said that if tariffs were set up we could not [abolish them. But there might be men in this country who could abolish them. The strength of Parliament was not confined to the strength of one individual. These were most grave matters. The story itself was bad enough, but the principles on which the arrangement was founded were absolutely fatal to the free trade contention. He could not blame the right hon. Gentleman, but he had always had differences with the right hon. Gentleman on this point. This was not the first time they had crossed swords on the question of sugar. He was still of the same opinion, and he did not think the matter could be left where it was. When the Conservative Government signed the Convention they had to come to the House and ask that they would carry it out, and pass a Sugar Convention Bill. But when the matter came up again, there should be a Resolution of disapproval so that the matter might be borne in mind by the Prime Minister. He apologised for putting the case in the same way as he had put it before, but he for one could not go back. The responsibility of the Government was far greater than that of the party opposite, who had had no experience and who were experimenting. The Government had had the experience of five years of dear sugar and disappointment with regard to every advantage we were told we should get. In the face of that experience and the tremendous discussions which had taken place on the subject in the country, he was afraid no alternative would be offered to the Government but to find some means of getting out of the tangle into which they had got.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said that Members in all quarters of the House would admire the consistency with which the right hon. Gentleman had stated his case. The holy war which had been carried on by a few hon. Members opposite against the policy of the Government had divided itself into three attacks. The attack of the hon. Member for the East Toxteth Division was developed on the Convention, that of the right hon.

Gentleman on the past pledges of the Government, and that of the hon. Member for Brighton on the economic facts. With regard to the first, he was little qualified to take part, but it appeared to be something akin to what was termed sessioning in Scotland. The right hon. Gentleman had been sessioned by his followers for having fallen away from the free trade faith. Fair trade had many phases, but when hon. Gentlemen opposite spoke about the blessings which were brought about by bringing in cheap sugar, as one of the reasons for supporting free trade, and as one of the reasons for denouncing the Convention brought in by the Conservative Party and continued with modification by the present Government, and which they were told prevented 500,000 tons of cheap sugar being put on the market so as to lower the price of that commodity, he would remind the House that that was not Mr. Cobden's view of free trade. Mr. Cobden said—

> "We do not ask for free trade primarily for the purpose of purchasing at a cheaper money rate. We require the natural price of the world's markets. Whether it becomes dearer or cheaper matters not to us, provided that the people of this country have the commodity at the natural price."

That was the reason which led Mr. Gladstone to denounce the system of bounties, which he said did not carry out the fundamental principle of free trade, which was a free exchange of commodities. The Conservative Party contended that the Sugar Convention had done something to restore natural prices. The first effect of this Convention had been increased stability and an increased absence of oscillation in the production. The basis of taxation had been broadened, it was true, but so also had the basis of production, and we had made ourselves less and less dependent on Continental countries. The world's production of beet sugar from 1902, the year before the Convention, up to 1906 had remained comparatively steady. In 1902 it was 6,300,000 tons; in 1906 it was 6,900,000 tons. But what the Conservative Party said when the Convention was entered into was that it would encourage the production of cane sugar. The world's production of cane sugar had gone up from 6,300,000 tons in 1902 to 7,300,000 tons in 1906. They had then, for the first time, the larger part of the world's supply composed of cane sugar. The effect of the Convention upon the price, and he had taken out the average for the four years previous to the Convention and for the four years succeeding it, was that for the four years previous to the Convention the price for lump or loaf sugar was 13·1s., and for the four years succeeding the Convention 13·5s. For other refined sugars the figures were, four years before, 11·8s.; four years after, 12·1s. Beetroot sugar, four years before, was 9·4s., and four years after 9·5s. Then let the House take cane sugar. They were told that the Convention had been engineered in order artificially to raise the price of cane sugar; but so far from that being the case the price of cane sugar was actually lower four years after the Convention than it was four years before, the figures being 10·87s. and 10·21s. per cwt. The figures proved that the apprehensions of hon. Gentlemen that there would be a great rise in prices had not been justified by the results. There was one point, a rather interesting one, to which he desired to refer, because it showed the indirect effect of giving security for, and directing more capital to the sugar industry. In the last available report relating to Barbados, he came across a paragraph which cited, as evidence of the greater stability of the sugar industry, probably due to the combined influence of the operation of the local Plantations in Aid Acts, and the proposals of the Convention, the fact that the machinery imported into Barbados during the five years up to 1902 for use in the manufacture of sugar, amounted to £4,845, and in 1906, the amount of machinery imported was £14,000, of which £12,500 came from this country. That was the result in that island, where the circumstances of the industry were small. When hon. Gentlemen opposite criticised the methods of the Convention, he was bound to say that, to a certain extent, he agreed that it would have been very much more simple, if it could possibly have been done, to have endeavoured to achieve the same end by putting on countervailing duties. But that would not be approved of by hon. Members opposite; still, they could not complain about the round-about methods of the Convention, because the very structure of that body was a concession to free trade ideas. When the hon. Member for Brighton talked about the United States and wondered why they had not become a party to the Convention, the answer was simple. They did not become a party to it because they put on countervailing duties, and if it had not been for the countervailing duties of the United States the sugar industry of the West Indian islands would have gone to the wall long before any Brussels Convention could have saved it. The only other point to which he desired to refer was in reference to Russian retaliation. They had been told that one of the effects of the Sugar Convention was that there would be a Russian retaliatory duty on Indian tea. They were now told that this duty was to be removed, a circumstance on which, of course, the Government was to be congratulated. But what had been the effect of the retaliatory duty imposed by Russia? The hon. Member for Preston had asked a question on the subject last July, and he had himself taken particular note of the answer given. In 1903, when the duty was imposed, the quantity of tea imported from India into Russia was 3,900,000 lbs.; in 1906, although this terrible and crushing duty had been in operation, the import of tea from India into Russia had risen to 12,200,000 lbs. He congratulated the Government on grappling with the situation, and he could not say that he admired the consistency of those hon Gentlemen below the gangway opposite who had attacked them.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) said he desired to call the attention of the Government to a different subject, namely, the question of martial law in Natal and the case of Dinizulu. He did not desire to add to the difficulty of the situation which existed, and he certainly did not wish to find fault with the Government, nor to say anything harsh of the Government of Natal, although he entirely disagreed with the course they had taken. There was now between the Government of Natal and His Majesty's Government a condition of acute friction with regard to the natives of Natal, who were nine-tenths of the Colonists and all British subjects. The civil rights of the Zulus were suspended, and in the case of Dinizulu, that chief had been imprisoned for six months without any charges having been made against him, and he had been deprived of the position which had been specially granted to him by the Imperial Government. Under these circumstances, it was clearly undesirable that the present position should be prolonged longer than was necessary. He wanted to give an opportunity, which he thought his hon. friend would welcome, for a statement to be made of what steps the Government proposed to take under the existing situation. There were three aspects of this question—the personal one of Dinizulu, the constitutional question of depriving people in a self-governing colony of the rights of civil government by the proclamation of martial law, and the question of the system of native administration carried on in Natal—which had been brought to the attention of the whole Empire in a very marked manner by the issue of the Report of the Commission appointed by the Government of Natal themselves. He would deal first with the personal case of Dinizulu, who was a British subject placed in a position of authority some ten years ago by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham when Secretary for the Colonies. He was appointed under the distinct pledge that he was to hold the position and be entitled to a salary of £500 a year as long as he obeyed the laws, and on the express condition that neither his position nor his salary should be withdrawn without the approval of the Secretary of State for the time being. These being the conditions, in May, 1906, he was charged by the Government of Natal with being concerned in so-called treasonable proceedings, and he was summoned to a sort of informal inquiry by the Governor of Natal and the Ministers of Natal, who acquitted him of the charges brought against him. It would be found in the Blue-book that the Governor parted on such friendly terms with Dinizulu that he proposed to him an exchange of photographs. Then, suddenly, in August of this last year, very much the same charges were brought against

Dinizulu, who was told that he would be arrested and charged with treason. The Imperial Government were asked to assent to that, but they declined to do so, on the ground that so far as the evidence was before them there was no foundation for taking up that position against him. Imperial troops were refused except on condition that the Imperial Government should have some voice in the settlement which took place afterwards. The Natal Government declined that proposal, and proceeded to take steps to arrest Dinizulu with their own force of 3,000 men. No definite charge had then been made against him, and Dinizulu had never made the slightest objection to being arrested or to surrendering. He said: "If you have anything against me, tell me, so that I may answer it." It was said that this was a matter for the Natal Government, and that His Majesty's Government had no right to interfere. But the Natal Government themselves last year, through the mouth of Mr. Administrator Beaumont, had put on record that this was not merely a question for Natal, but for South Africa. It was an Imperial question in which the assent of the South African Governments and of the Imperial Government must be obtained. He would read the despatch to the House. It was written by Mr. Beaumont on 20th August last year and addressed to the Secretary of State. He said—

> "It would be necessary in order to effect the arrest of Dinizulu to marshal a considerable force and frame an indictment against him, which would be certain of proof in a Court of law."

—a thing which had not been done to this day—

> "But seeing that this is a matter which affects not only Natal, but the neighbouring Colonies and South Africa generally, Ministers are of opinion that before any action is taken, we should try and obtain the co-operation and support of His Majesty's Government, and of the neighbouring Colonies."

There was an admission that, in spite of the Natal Prime Minister having very improperly said that it was "damnable interference" on the part of that House, it was a matter involving the whole of South Africa and the Imperial Government also. Not only did they ask for Imperial troops and ask the Imperial Government to co-operate with them, but they approached the Transvaal Government and they asked General Botha to send an envoy of his own into Zululand, to see whether he agreed with their view that it was necessary to take severe steps against Dinizulu. General Botha sent an agent who made a Report, in which he said in effect—

> "Dinizulu is a negligible quantity. He is doing no harm. Leave him alone. There is nothing in these charges against him."

In spite of that Report the Natal Government sent a large force into Zululand. Dinizulu at once came in. The whole trouble, if it ever existed, was over when he surrendered and was put into gaol, but the Natal Government proclaimed martial law over the whole of Zululand and the Northern part of Natal in the teeth of the strong opinion of the Governor that such proclamation was premature and unnecessary, and of the protests of the Imperial Government. The rights of half a million or more of British subjects were entirely set aside under conditions which were novel and wholly unknown in the history of the British Empire. Dinizulu, on 23rd December, was subjected to a preliminary examination before the magistrates in a closed Court, from which Press and public were excluded, upon no definite charges at all. Asked by Lord Elgin in December or January with what it was proposed to charge him, a list was given of general descriptions of offences, such as murder, sedition, incitement to murder, contravening the Arms Act, but to that day not a single definite charge had been given in response to repeated inquiries. The preliminary examination was going on, and they could not say when, if ever, the man would be brought to trial. That would be serious enough if Dinizulu was an ordinary British subject in a self-governing Colony with which the Imperial Government had no direct or special connection, but it became a great deal more serious in view of the fact that this man held his position under an express pledge given by the Imperial Government, that without their approval he was not to be removed from his chieftainship or deprived of his salary. After having put him in gaol in this way in December, the Natal Government sounded the Imperial Government as to whether Dinizulu's salary of £500 should be taken away from him. The answer of the Imperial Government at once was—"Certainly not. You will be pre-judging his case. At present, he is not found guilty of anything, and is entitled to be considered innocent." In spite of that expression of opinion, on 30th November his salary was stopped, although as a matter of fact the executive Act which carried it out was only signed by the Governor on 26th May. He should like to ask the Under-Secretary for the Colonies why the Governor was advised to sanction that Act, and how long the Government intended to allow a British subject, to whom the Imperial Government had made a distinct and definite pledge, that failing guilt, which had not been proved, he should be maintained in a position and given a salary of a certain kind, to be kept a prisoner. Dinizulu was in very bad health and it was not at all impossible that to confine him month after month in gaol would have most serious consequences. Every week that was allowed to go on was attended with greater risk. In regard to the general conditions under which martial law might be proclaimed, they were perfectly well known. Unless there was a condition either of war, or of rebellion, or of unrest under which the civil authorities were practically paralysed, martial law was altogether an anomaly. It had never been contended by the Natal Government that that condition of things had existed at all. It was contended that Dinizulu's presence in Zululand was a danger, but the moment he surrendered, the danger passed away, if it ever existed. Yet five men, constituting the Executive a of small Colony, had claimed to deprive 500,000 British subjects of their rights under conditions which were wholly novel, and which had never been urged as a ground for proclaiming martial law before, and it would appear as if the Imperial Government was paralysed by their action. He quite admitted that the situation was a difficult one for His Majesty's Government. Nobody desired to interfere with the legitimate right of self-government in Natal or anywhere else, but he did not know whether the rights of self-government went so far as to justify Ministers in thus suspending all the rights of the constitution which had been granted to the Colony. He wished to ask what was the condition of things which, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, justified the Governor in assenting to giving away his prerogative, so to say, and proclaiming martial law when he himself declared there was no such state of things in existence as the law considered necessary to martial law? There was a circular, issued by Lord Carnarvon, on this point in March, 1887. He would quote from that well-considered authority the three conditions under which, in the opinion of the Colonial Office, a Governor ought to proclaim martial law. They were—

> "The Governor should not proclaim martial law unless he is satisfied of the existence of the following grounds:—(1) That there are armed men in armed resistance to the authority of the Crown; (2) That such armed resistance cannot be dealt with by the authority acting merely in aid of the Civil power in the ordinary manner; (3) That such armed resistance cannot be promptly and effectually supressed otherwise than by subjecting the inhabitants of the disturbed district to direct military control, and by inflicting summary punishment upon offenders against the peace."

What had been done amounted to a prostitution of the system of martial law, and it was a most dangerous prostitution, because if it could be done in a Colony it might be done also in the Mother Country. It had become really an important constitutional question to know what was the view of the Imperial Government as to their rights in this matter, when the Colonial Government had acted to the great detriment of hundreds of thousands of His Majesty's subjects in that Colony. All that had happened in a Colony where there was a very small European population, which had been described in a petition coming from Natal as a small oligarchy consisting of about 23,000 persons, governing an enormously larger proportion of the King's coloured subjects, and being found by the Report of a Commission of Natal Colonists to have misgoverned those people in a shocking manner.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Oh, oh!

*Mr. MACKARNESS said he did not think the noble Lord could have read the Report.

EARL WINTERTON: Yes, I have read every word of it.

*MR. MACKARNESS said he did not wish to take up time making quotations from the Report, but he maintained that that document was the most scathing indictment of any Government in regard to native administration that had appeared in South Africa, and it had been admitted by the Colonial Office that that was the character of it. That fact had also been admitted in Natal as well. The Natal Government had been found wanting by its own trusted citizens in this respect, and it was admitted that the natives had real grievances. Did the Government propose to take any steps, either by the appointment of an Imperial or a South African Commission, to see that the undoubted grievances revealed in the Report, to which he had referred, were in some way remedied, or was the matter to be left to be dealt with by the Natal Parliament in a way which might or might not be satisfactory? They might or might not agree with what had been done by the Natal Government, but they would all agree that the present condition of things was very undesirable, and if they could by bringing moral pressure or giving advice or bringing into line all the Colonies in South Africa to join in a common policy, get either the discharge of Dinizulu or his trial upon some definite charge, they would gain something by this debate. If they went on as they had been doing, week after week, and month after month, putting Questions and being told by the Under-Secretary that he could add nothing to what he had already said, and that the Government was pressing the matter and the Natal Government was sending no answer, they would only be going from bad to worse. Whilst giving credit to the Natal Government for believing what they had done to be necessary, nevertheless, on account of the special position of Dinizulu as well as on broad constitutional grounds, he thought they were right in pointing out to the Natal Government that they were making grave mistakes which ought to be in some way remedied.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said there was only one thing which he regretted in the hon. Member's speech, and that was the phrase he used regarding the shocking misgovernment of the native races in Natal by the Natal Government. He did not think that was true, and he thought he could prove his statement by evidence. The speech to which they had listened had been moderate in tone and was well based so far as the policy of this country was concerned. The phrase, however, which he had used, was particularly reprehensive in view of the fact that the Natal Government had already taken action upon that Report in regard to reforming the administration of Natal. The Natal Government had introduced a Bill on the subject which would set up a new administration with an advisory council, and, in fact, would carry out the chief conclusions of the Report. For those reasons he regretted a statement of the kind which the hon. Member had made at this moment. In certain constitutional questions it was not wise of the Government ever to intervene, except under very critical circumstances, and he doubted whether the circumstances were so critical, or if they were critical they were due to the action of the Imperial Government who had it in their power when martial law was proclaimed through the Governor of Natal to have prevented it. But the Government took no such action. It did not intervene, but permitted martial law to be proclaimed. Did the Under-Secretary for the Colonies dispute the point that official responsibility for the proclamation of martial law rested with the representative of the Crown in Natal? No Governor of any Colony was the servant of the Ministry of that Colony, and so long as their constitutional connection remained the Governor of any Colony was the servant of the Crown. He had been refreshing his mind with the instructions issued at the time of the Jamaica Riots, when the Colonial Office felt it to be its duty to issue a Memorandum upon the proclamation of martial law. First and last, both in the general Memorandum and in the regulations, it was stated that the Governor and the Governor alone had power to proclaim martial law, had power to stop it, and to stop it at any moment. The Law Officers of the Crown had suggested that the Governor had no power to act upon his own initiative for the Crown, and that he could not but proclaim martial law when he was advised to do so by the Government of a self-governing Colony. If they yielded the point that the Governor had not the power, and that the Crown had not the power, all their constitutional position, so far as the Colonies were concerned, vanished for ever. The Government would have been in a strong position if it had objected to martial law at the beginning, but once having permitted and proclaimed martial law, once the representative of the Crown had acted by proclamation, then, he submitted this House and the Government had no right whatever to interfere. He did not say that martial law was justified in the circumstances, because he did not know, but what he did say was that Natal felt apprehensive, and he repudiated on behalf of their fellow countrymen that the Government of Natal had any ulterior or vicious motive or adopted any foul means to secure a conviction against Dinizulu which would displace him from the position he was in and remove him from his own country.

*MR. MACKARNESS: I did not suggest that in any way.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said the Colony was apprehensive and the white people believed their position was in danger. The Government had sources of information which led them to consider that it was their duty to have martial law proclaimed. They might have been right or wrong, he did not know, but he knew they would have to bear the cost of the expedition into Zululand and all the trouble and anxiety of subsequent proceedings. That was the position which he would like the House to consider with something like sympathy and generosity. This Colony believed it was face to face with a perilous situation, although it might have been mistaken, and if they had not taken the action they did the events of which they were apprehensive might have occurred. They could at least claim that their action in proclaiming martial law had brought in Dinizulu, and had removed the dangers which they apprehended. The Government of this country, or some members of it, had not been either generous or sympathetic to Natal. He would ask the House whether the language used by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Natal would have been used to Australia, Canada, the Transvaal, or the Orange River Colony. His words were—

> "The Secretary of State relies on the assurance given by your Ministers, that he [Dinizulu] shall have a fair trial under ordinary law procedure. Any further assistance in the same sense you may give me will be welcome."

He submitted that was not such a cablegram as should have been sent to the Minister of a self-governing Colony. Would the Government of this country have sent such a statement to Canada when Louis Riel was put on trial? The French Canadians were opposed to Riel's undergoing trial, and they protested against his being hanged. The sympathies of this country were aroused because he belonged to the race in the minority. No Government in this country would have ventured to send to Canada such a cablegram as that which was sent to Natal in regard to the case of Dinizulu. It was the unsympathetic position of the Government he impeached that afternoon. A more unsympathetic position had never been taken up by the Government. He admitted that the cablegrams and replies to Questions were all expressed with the correctness of phraseology which properly belonged to Government Departments, but no one who had listened to the tone of the appeals made by Members below the gangway who were antipathetic to the Natal Government could help realising—he would not say the madness, he did not wish to say anything so extreme—the unsympathetic feeling evinced by the representatives of the Government in this House concerning Natal.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby) indicated dissent.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said he was not alone in thinking what he had said. There were a good many people in this country who thought as he did, and who said that Natal in the circumstances ought to be allowed to work out her own salvation in this case. Hon. Members below the gangway and others seemed to suggest that the Government of Natal had power to deal with Dinizulu. Though he was not a lawyer he maintained that Dinizulu the instant he was arrested passed out of the hands of the Natal Government and into the hands of the Courts of the country. He was being tried, whatever the faults of procedure were. He himself thought that the preliminary examination was too prolonged. He regretted that, but if any Member of the House suggested that the magistrate sitting in the case or the Government of Natal were lengthening out the examination for any ulterior purpose he thought in the name of fair-play the suggestion ought to be repudiated by every honest and honourable man. If the procedure was slow, then the law of the country must be altered. It was their place and duty to await the result of the trial. As to the suspension of Dinizulu's salary, he asked if it was reasonable to suggest that a man whose office had been suspended should continue to enjoy the emoluments of that office. Surely the suspension of the salary went with the suspension of the service. [Cries of "No."] Perhaps the Under-Secretary for the Colonies would correct him if he was wrong.

Colonel SEELY: Sometimes it is the case, and sometimes it is not. There is no argument to be drawn from that. There are precedents both ways.

Sir GILBERT PARKER said he did not pretend to speak with the voice of authority on that point at all. He put forward the point in order to have elucidation. He thought the attitude of the Governor of Natal had been exceptionally correct and admirable throughout. From first to last he had performed his duties in a very difficult position with great discretion and care. He would read to the House one or two sentences from *Hansard* in regard to the case of Dinizulu. Replying to the hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division on 31st March, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies said—

> "The preparatory examination in Dinizulu's case is proceeding in ordinary course before the tribunals created by law for the purpose. Government have no control over such tribunals and are neither responsible nor can they be required to answer for the proceedings there."

That was the opinion of the representative of the Crown. The Under-Secretary further said—

> "There has been no undue delay: evidence has been brought forward as quickly as possible. Any allegations of coercion under martial law to sign depositions would be to the best of my information entirely baseless. Accusations of brow beating in Court would be equally untrue. . . . I need merely say that none of the prisoners have been arrested except upon sworn information and warrants granted by judicial authority. The course followed has been that prescribed by the long established law of the Colony and of Cape Colony before Natal was annexed."

It had been said that responsible government ought not to be granted to a Colony with so small a number of people as there were in Natal. Did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Forest of Dean say that?

*Sir CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I have always said so.

Sir GILBERT PARKER said it was rather late in the day for hon. and right hon. Gentlemen to set up that particular plea. The demand of Liberals in the past had been to give early freedom to small peoples, and now the same Party turned round and said: "Ah! it is wrong to grant self-government to so few people." It might not have been wise to give Natal control over the natives of Zululand. He was not sure, if the matter of federation came to be dealt with, whether this country would not have to decide whether Zululand should not be brought back to the control of the Imperial Government; but not for the reasons suggested by hon. Gentlemen—that they had been shockingly governed. The mistakes which had been made were mistakes which might have been made by hon. Gentlemen opposite if they had been in the same position. It was a long lane that had no turning, but it was a short road that led to a Colonial *impasse.* Things in Natal would right themselves if we left the people there alone. The Bill which had been brought in by the Natal Government was intended to put native affairs upon a safer and sounder footing.

The Natal Government was doing its best under the most difficult circumstances, which were made more difficult by the action of this Government and of hon. Members below the gangway. He believed that the accomplishment of federation would solve the native question; and the other night when this question was being discussed he thought it well that the House should assert its position, and that the Government should do what it could to throw light on our own position and decision in relation to confederation. He did not support the interrogation this afternoon, because he thought it was unwise, irritating, and only provocative of evil and not of good, and that the result would be as it had been in the past. The Colony should work out its own salvation, and they could not help them by intervening so constantly and in so irritating a fashion in the course of events in a Colony which had proved itself one of the ablest and truest to the traditions of the British Empire.

*Sir CHARLES W. DILKE protested against the introduction of anything like a party element into the discussion of that most difficult of all questions, whether they were to treat a small Colony in the same way as they would treat Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, or the Dominion of New Zealand. In the present case they were dealing with a very small white population, carrying on the affairs of an enormous native community, and under the circumstances that the conditions made in handing over Zululand had been broken, with admitted breach of faith. Zululand was handed over to Natal by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, and the conditions made by that right hon. Gentleman when Secretary of State for the Colonies had been broken, by the admission of the Natal Government. The strongest language that had ever been used in this House with regard to the mischief done by the Government of a small self-governing Colony was used by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham with regard to Newfoundland, and the strongest condemnation ever passed on any self-governing Colony was passed on Newfoundland by the late Lord Salisbury. The hon. Member for Gravesend was a Canadian, and he knew that an appeal was made by Natal by telegram to the other Colonies to make common cause with them, and that Canada declined to act with Natal on that occasion. In the very last Canadian Blue-book which recorded the recent visit of Mr. King to the Home Government, it was stated that the extreme view of the rights of the self-governing Colonies in the affairs in which the Imperial Government—or, as it was called, the British Government—was concerned must be used with a feeling of deep restraint. [A Member on the Opposition Bench: Hear, hear.] Yes, but had Natal shown that feeling of restraint? Was it possible for the British Government to be silent on an occasion where prerogative martial law, not statutory martial law, had been called in under circumstances wholly without precedent, and with the admission of the Government so calling in that prerogative martial law that the criterion of martial law was missing? In this case the criterion was armed rising or a rebellion, and the inability of the ordinary Courts, civil or criminal, to administer justice. On this question of martial law and the responsibility for calling it in, a sort of distinction had been sought to be drawn between the self-governing Colonies and other Colonies; but it ought to be remembered that this precedent of martial law affected us here as well as other parts of the Dominions of the Crown. There was no martial law in the Monmouth rebellion, though the ordinary Courts were bad enough. Martial law was not proclaimed in 1715.

Mr. MACKARNESS: Nor in 1745.

* Sir CHARLES W. DILKE: 1745 is doubtful, although there was regular war then. The question of whether there was a difference in respect of martial law between the self-governing Colonies and other parts of the dominions of the Crown was debated in the House of Lords. Lord Spencer on that occasion laid down fine old Liberal views which he commended to the Attorney-General, and Lord Davey, whose knowledge of the subject no one would deny, insisted

on the direct responsibility of this Parliament for the introduction of martial law in the self-governing Colonies, a view which Lord Halsbury did not challenge. That view in regard to martial law he thought still held good. The hon. Member for Gravesend kept asking them on that side of the House whether they would dare to refuse those powers to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman and cheered him when he put his Question, but the hon. Gentleman must concede that the case here was different. The hon. Member knew that Canada had supported this Parliament and the Crown on two previous occasions against what Newfoundland considered to be rights of a self-governing Colony. There were exceptional cases of other Colonies where the Crown was so distinctly interested that it was impossible to avoid doing something which was an interference with their internal affairs; but that would never be required in the case of the great dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Canada said that their rights could only be asserted with dignity and restraint; and we had a right to ask that that restraint should be exercised by the Parliament and Government of Natal. The Natal Government proclaimed martial law for the purpose of making a demonstration in Zululand, when Dinizulu was willing to come in. They then proceeded to establish, with the consent of the Governor, which ought not to have been given, prerogative martial law; that was to say, they took the right of hanging and flogging without trial into their own hands. The question at issue was the arbitrary power that had been taken without precedent or right. That was a principle against which they in that House must protest, independently of the number of people who had been flogged or hanged. What was the use of Magna Charta or the Petition of Right—which were all part of the law of Natal—if, when there was admittedly no armed rising, no rebellion, they were to have martial law of this kind set up by the Government of Natal on their own account, involving all sorts of people. The principles laid down in the Carnarvon circular, which was sent round to the other Colonies, and afterwards by Sir M. Beach to a self-governing Colony, had been distinctly violated in a degree which two or three years ago would have been thought inconceivable. The hon. Member might have been right or wrong about the treatment of Dinizulu; that was a smaller matter. The principle he had referred to did not apply to Natal alone. It applied to the Empire. If prerogative martial law was defended on this occasion, it might be defended in Ireland, or in this country, or anywhere. Lord Davey had put it beyond question that a self-governing Colony in a matter of this kind was under the control of this Parliament. He left it to his hon. friend to make such a defence as he could; but in his opinion no ground had been suggested for the proclamation of prerogative martial law. It was not alleged that there was an armed rising or that the ordinary tribunals of the Colony would not work. In such a case as Zululand, if we were dealing with a foreign country our honour would force us to interfere, and were they not to press the Government to interfere on this occasion simply because Natal happened to be a self-governing Colony?

COLONEL SEELY said he made no complaint that this question had been raised. In regard to Dinizulu, it would not be fair of him to speak without trying to hold the balance evenly, and when the hon. Member for Berkshire presumed on the innocence of Dinizulu he would say it was as unreasonable to presume him to be innocent now as it was unreasonable to presume him to be guilty. He thought the hon. Member had forgotten the very strong report of Sir Charles Saunders, who had always supported the Zulus, but who later wrote a despatch in the contrary sense.

MR. MACKARNESS: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that in Natal, as in England, the presumption is in favour of a prisoner's innocence until he is found guilty?

COLONEL SEELY said that was what he said. They could not presume that the Natal Government had no reason for anxiety. But it would be as unreasonable to assume that the Natal Government had no cause for anxiety about Dinizulu as to assume before his trial was concluded that Dinizulu was guilty. As to the suspicions of the Natal Government, they were unavoidable in view of the very strong report of Sir Charles Saunders. Might he recall exactly what had happened with regard to Dinizulu? Dinizulu was sent to St. Helena in 1889 because it was supposed he had been concerned in native disturbances. Proposals were made by the Secretary of State in 1893 for his return, but the Natal Government thought that this would be inadvisable unless we dealt with the question of handing Zululand over to Natal. Nothing was done till 1898, when it was again proposed that Natal should annex Zululand. It was then again proposed—and it was impossible to say it was part of a bargain, the things were coincident—that Dinizulu and his uncles should be allowed to return. It was agreed, and a binding agreement was entered into by her Majesty's Government and the Natal Government that Zululand should be annexed to Natal, and that Dinizulu and his uncles should return. When Dinizulu arrived at Durban the following document, drawn up by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, was handed to him—

> "The position assigned to him by the Government and the salary allotted to it will be held during the pleasure of the Government, and will be strictly dependent on the manner in which he behaves and obeys the law laid down for his guidance, but will not be withdrawn without the approval of the Secretary of State."

It was quite plain, therefore, that a definite, honourable undertaking was made between this Government, the Government of Natal, and Dinizulu that he should hold a certain position and draw a certain salary during good behaviour, but that under no circumstances should he be deprived of his salary without the approval of the Secretary of State. When the Government were attacked for unsympathetic action—and the Government certainly since he had had the honour of standing there to represent them, had endeavoured to the full to give credit to Natal for the difficult position in which it stood—it was only fair that the true facts should be stated. When Dinizulu was accused of a certain crime, the question came up as to whether his salary went with it. The Natal Government said they wished to withdraw the salary, and they asked for the permission of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State said he would not give them permission. The Natal Government withdrew the salary. Now he appealed to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite to realise the extraordinary position in which His Majesty's Government had been placed by this episode. They could not possibly have acted otherwise than they did, and he was sure that they would have the support of every Member of the House. Dinizulu was specially under our charge. The presumption of innocence until guilt was proved was so strong that he was sure that if the right hon. Gentleman opposite had been at the Colonial Office he could not have agreed to the withdrawal of the salary.

Sir **GILBERT PARKER** asked whether the Natal Government did not hold that there was a difference between the suspension of the salary and the withdrawal of the salary.

Colonel **SEELY** said that that might be so, but the Secretary of State plainly indicated that he could not give his approval to either supension or withdrawal, and the consent of the Secretary of State was necessary to either. What action His Majesty's Government ought to take now was a matter of extreme difficulty. They fully realised that the Natal Government were in a delicate position, being so small a number of white men among a great warlike tribe. But Natal had not acted in a way they anticipated they would act; they had deliberately refused to abide by an undertaking which they thought they were quite certain to abide by. The answers they had given to the Government showed that they did not appreciate that point. They had said it was a rule of the Civil Service, but that did not touch the point at all as to the definite power of the Secretary of State to withhold his assent. In some parts of the Civil Service it was the rule that, on occasions like that, the salary was withdrawn or suspended. In other cases, notably in the case of Colonial appointments, half the salary continued and half was withdrawn on the ground that half of the salary might be said to be emolument and half the necessary expenses of living. A definite question was asked him by the hon. Member for Berkshire why the Government agreed to the suspension of Dinizulu's salary. The answer was that the Government did not agree, and protested against it.

MR. MACKARNESS: Why was the Governor allowed to sign the document?

COLONEL SEELY said it was done without the Government's knowledge. The Governor gave his assent because he believed it was necessary for him to act in accordance with the advice of his Ministers. But Sir Matthew Nathan had served us so well, and was a Governor on whom the Colonial Office placed so much reliance and who certainly had played a valuable part in endeavouring to support the views of His Majesty's Government in opposition to martial law, that they could not blame him for the action he took. But, though Sir Matthew Nathan thought he was constitutionally bound to act on the advice of his Ministers, he protested at the time, and, of course, protested still. The question had been raised as to the cost of Dinizulu's defence, which, of course, was prejudiced to a certain extent *in posse*, if not *in esse*, by the fact that he had no salary with which to pay these costs. The Government viewed with great concern the fact that the salary had been withdrawn at a time when it was so necessary to him, and that view had been stated very emphatically by the Secretary of State in the telegram read out the other day. But they were advised that so far Dinizulu's case and the case for his defence had not suffered by this circumstance, for this reason—that, so far, very little expense could be incurred because he was not permitted to get evidence from Zululand. That was, of course, one of the grievances. But it followed that the expense was reduced. He could only say now that he thought the hon. Member for Gravesend, since he had recalled that document to his attention, would realise that His Majesty's Government were under an honourable obligation with Dinizulu, entered into by a most respected Secretary of State on behalf of the Government, and they were bound to abide by it. They were bound to see that our part of the bargain was fulfilled, and they would do their utmost to see that our honourable obligation was carried out. The question had been raised why they had not refused to assent to the proclamation of martial law. The view His Majesty's Government then took was that the Governor was bound to act on the advice of his Ministers if they were satisfied that there was any clear evidence whatever of justification for martial law. They had all heard with great pleasure the strong words which had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, in a recent debate, in which he had laid down the principle that this country should never abandon its right of reviewing such questions as these through the Governor, and to maintain the Governor in that high position of authority which, once he was deprived of it, they would hardly again get to the same high standard.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): What I exactly stated was this, that we were informed that the Governor had been advised that he must assent to the opinion of his Ministers when it was declared by them that martial law must be proclaimed. The only point I made was this, and I make it now emphatically again, that the Governor has the responsibility—a very, very grave responsibility—and if he is clear that the circumstances do not exist to warrant the proclamation of martial law, then he is bound, constitutionally bound, to resist it.

COLONEL SEELY said that that certainly had been his own view until he took office, and his personal view was that it was just and right. He should imagine there seemed to be some doubt cast upon it. Therefore, he had asked his hon. friend the Attorney-General, as far as possible, and as no layman could, to elucidate the whole matter, and to tell them what was strictly the legal truth of this matter so far as it might be said to be a question of law. He himself thought that it could not be better stated than it had been stated by the right hon. Gentleman. Certainly it would be an evil day if it were to be supposed that the Governor had no power of that kind, and the last link which bound the separate parts of the Empire would be severed. He turned now to the final question asked by his hon. friend the Member for Berkshire, and referred to again by the hon. Member for Gravesend, and emphasised by his right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean. The hon. Member asked what they were going to do to remedy these native grievances referred in the Report. What could they do? What power had His Majesty's Government now they had given self-government to the Colony, except the power of public opinion as concentrated in that House, and in the advice they gave? Self-governing Colonies governed themselves, and in the matter of native grievances His Majesty's Government's only power was that of making representations. They had been prodigal in making strong representations, and they would continue to do so. It was their duty to do so, because in that House they had a special responsibility towards all native races in the Empire unrepresented in that Assembly. That was a statement with which nearly all parties in that House would agree. But with regard to the native races residing in Natal their power was limited to making representations. And he would remind his right hon. friend that on a Motion which he supported a few days ago he had drawn attention to the growing desire of persons in South Africa to give fairer treatment to the natives. From the Report he might say that there was that growing desire, and therefore they had every reason to hope that the existing difficulties would be removed. They had reason to believe that federation would also help. But if they were going to attempt to take action which they could not carry through to a logical conclusion they might delay federation for years if not for ever, and they would do harm to the very natives they sought to protect. So it was impossible that they could take action unless they were quite sure that they could carry that action through. Finally, he would say that they were anxiously watching the course of events. They had made representations to the Natal Government, as they were bound to do in accordance with the honourable obligations of the Government towards Dinizulu, and towards all the natives in Zululand, having regard to the circumstances in which annexation took place. They would continue to make such representations. They did not desire to interfere with the Natal Government, and had shown their desire again and again and had gone far, in the last few weeks, to shield them from unworthy attack. Regarding the main point raised in this debate, they had clean hands; they had acted with moderation. His Majesty's Government had expressed a wish in regard to a matter in connection with which they had entered into an honourable obligation, but that wish had not been considered, and His Majesty's Government had, therefore, reason to complain. But, while complaining, they still regarded it as essential to keep at peace with the self-governing Colonies, and they hoped and trusted that before long some means might be found by which the native races might have their position ameliorated, and the whole question pass into calmer waters.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) said he did not propose to cover the whole ground. He wished to deal only with the very important and vital part of the controversy relating to the legal aspect of the question. His right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean had said that there was a great difference of opinion amongst very eminent jurists as to the meaning and scope of martial law. There was a statement of the law by Lord Davey in a case in the House of Lords with which he for one entirely concurred. Lord Davey there said that martial law ought not to be thought of except for the purpose of meeting armed force, and that it was only intended to be applied when a community was in face of an imminent danger which necessitated the application of physical force. That, undoubtedly, was a true proposition of law. He said "undoubtedly," but perhaps that was going a little too far, because there was another school of jurists, to which Lord Halsbury prominently belonged, which maintained that martial law might be applied not only in the face of actual armed force which nobody doubted, but also in order to deal with a situation in which armed force might be apprehended and for the purpose of preventing armed intervention. He did not think it would be to the convenience or meet the desire of the House if he were to enter into any disquisition of the reasons which had been advanced by those two schools of jurists. Let him try to apply their views to the existing situation. The precedents with regard to martial law almost always related to cases in our Crown Colonies or in our own country, and the argument had been as to how far the Executive was entitled to act without the consent of the Legislature, or in anticipation of the consent of the Legislature. The Executive had always been carefully hedged in in this respect. English lawyers had always been extremely jealous of allowing the Executive any discretionary power which might not be in accord with the public opinion of its time. Therefore, the Executive had always acknowledged that they must at the very earliest possible moment come to Parliament in order to have their acts validated. After they came and their acts were validated by the Legislature they were entitled to indemnity, and nothing could be said of their acts done under martial law during the period of proclamation. The responsibility for martial law was claimed by jurists to be ultimately with the Legislature. That made the present case more marked. They were dealing here, not with a Crown Colony, but with a self-governing Colony. Of course there were cases where self-governing Colonies had had their conduct brought under review. Nobody would deny, and he was quite sure his right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean would not deny, that this made a very important distinction, which had to be borne in mind in dealing with precedents. Let them take the case of Governor Eyre, who only continued martial law for a period of thirty days beyond the period of armed intervention, and yet in this country his action was considered a very strong exercise of executive power, and it was very strongly contested in our Courts. In Natal undoubtedly there had been a very much longer period of excess, so far as the period of insurrection was concerned, than was the case in connection with Governor Eyre. Apparently anything like armed insurrection had ceased in Zululand for a considerable time, yet still the condition of martial law was maintained. Of course that would be wholly impossible if it were being maintained in the hope of indemnity or approval from that House. But it was not the same thing when the Governor was maintaining martial law at the wish of his own responsible Ministers, and had the Natal Parliament at his back. If His Majesty's Government were dealing with a Crown Colony they would say at once: "You must exercise your discretion and terminate a condition of things so detrimental to and destructive of the safeguards of personal liberty in your colony." But when they were dealing with a Governor who was acting on the advice of his Ministers, then they were obliged to consider somewhat carefully how far that Governor should be placed in conflict with his responsible Ministers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's said he had been informed that the Governor was advised that he must assent. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had probably mistaken the terms that were used. The Governor might very well be advised that he ought to be careful as to how far he dissented from anything which was approved by his Parliament and his Ministers, but he did not think he could be advised that he was under a constitutional compulsion to assent. He did not think any authority had informed this Governor in any other sense. The making or withdrawal of the proclamation of martial law was one of the authorities vested in the Governor as head of the Executive administering the Colony, and he might exercise that power in opposition to the opinion of his council if he saw sufficient cause to dissent from such opinions. He did not think the right hon. Gentleman could say that that was a proposition involving any bad law. On the contrary, it was a proposition in which they entirely concurred. The next question that arose was how far it was safe or practicable to resist the will of the Colony and its legislature—to decline to accept the advice of his Ministers to whom he must look for his Act of Indemnity. The Ministers had control of local affairs. Of course, the Imperial Parliament could override the Colony if it liked. The authority was undoubted. There was no doubt at all about the technical right of this Parliament, first of all, to pass an Act which might override any local Act, and then, through the Ministers of the Crown, advise the Governor as to how he should proceed in any particular case. But he was sure the House would agree that that was a kind of authority to be exercised not only with caution and circumspection, but with very great reluctance. In this case it was asked why the Governor had sanctioned the proclamation of martial law. But let the House put themselves in the position of the Governor. He knew the Colony was constitutionally responsible for the "peace, order, and good government" of Natal These were the words by which full constitutional rights were conferred on a legislative Colony. They enabled the Legislature if it thought fit to put a Colony under a Coercion Act, or under a *régime* which was very like that of martial law, so that their legislative authority must be present to the Governor's mind when he declined to accept their advice. It would be an undesirable and a deplorable situation if the Governor put himself into a position in which he had to fight legislative measures, or even the Resolutions of the Parliament to which his responsible Ministers belonged, and some consideration must be given to him. He had to consider not only what was his legal right but what in all the circumstances was practicable. Hon. Members had treated the question of martial law with a good deal of feeling because it had a particular bearing on the case of Dinizulu. The argument about martial law was not quite so urgent as they supposed when they realised that the case in regard to Dinizulu stood on a far different and far stronger footing than any argument about martial law. His hon. friend had correctly stated that there was a contract between this country and Dinizulu. The legal documents which had passed between the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and Dinizulu and the Colony of Natal were perfectly explicit. To his mind, they left the legal situation without any doubt, and they showed an obligation on this country which he was sure the House would be glad to hear this country did not mean to neglect. After the annexation of Zululand, Dinizulu was deported to St. Helena. In 1895 the question arose as to whether or not he should go back, and then the Colony of Natal was pressing strongly for the annexation or incorporation of Zululand with Natal. That was what it desired, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham took care in discussing that proposal, on the part of Natal, to remind Natal that whatever was done in regard to the incorporation of Zululand would be made conditional upon the terms that we sought to exact or impose with regard to Dinizulu. In fact, it was literally and legally the case that the salary of Dinizulu was a condition of the incorporation of Zululand with Natal, and that if Natal was unable or unwilling to comply with the conditions, it ought to follow that Natal should be unwilling to continue to have Zululand incorporated with it. After all, these legal obligations were undertaken by very competent men on both sides, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham took the precaution of sending out to St. Helena the terms upon which Dinizulu was to be permitted to return, and of instructing the Governor of St. Helena that they should be laid before Dinizulu. These terms were that he was to be appointed, not paramount chief, but an induna, Government official; that he was to receive £500 salary; to have a house and a certain privileged position. Dinizulu accepted these terms. The bargain, therefore, between the British Government and him was perfectly clear. At the same time the then Colonial Secretary was careful to acquaint the Natal Government with what he was doing. He said, "If you want the incorporation of Zululand, understand that this is a condition of it—£500 a year to Dinizulu, a house, and an official position, and his salary not to be withdrawn without the consent of the Secretary of State." In other words, Dinizulu was to be under Imperial protection. Natal frankly and sincerely accepted that condition as the condition of getting what it wanted—namely, the incorporation of Zululand, and, having accepted it, the bargain became complete as between the three parties, the bargain between ourselves and Dinizulu, between ourselves and Natal, and between Natal and Dinizulu, so that there was no doubt whatever of the right of Dinizulu to his salary until the Secretary of State had signified that he approved of its withdrawal. There could be no doubt whatever that the stipulation that the salary should not be withdrawn without the consent of the Secretary of State applied to suspension necessarily as well as to withdrawal. Then it had been alleged that if they paid his salary it might be taken to be a condonation of breaches of contract or other wrongs of which he might be guilty. That argument had no validity in law and there could be no question of condonation. Then it was said on the argument of the Imperial Government it might almost be taken that the criminal law was to be imperative without the approval of the Secretary of State. If it was illegal and bound nobody, Natal should not have assented to it. She should have said: "We will not accept Zululand with such a condition as that." But Natal did nothing of the sort. It did accept Zululand, and was therefore bound by this condition. He had gone at some length into the legal aspect of the case, because he could not help thinking that those who were advising the Natal Government had scarcely appreciated its importance and explicitness. He really could not help believing that the legal advisers of the Natal Government were, he would not say not doing their best, but were not really weighing all the legal considerations they ought to keep in mind in dealing with the situation, because undoubtedly we were under obligations both of law and of honour which we could not and ought not and would not seek to escape. There was no desire to enter into a conflict, unless of an academic character, with Natal with regard to the general operations of martial law, because martial law was not necessary to our contention so far as Dinizulu was concerned. At the same time, he might express the hope, and perhaps the belief, that Natal would see the danger and inconvenience of allowing martial law to prevail under the particular circumstances for so long a time. Undoubtedly, it was a matter within the cognisance and the rights of the Imperial Government. The Imperial Government were always slow to move because of the great constitutional difficulties involved. There might come a situation—he hoped it would never come—when, however slow the Imperial Government might be to act it might find itself forced to act.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said there were a few points on this subject which he thought ought to be pressed home. They could not with a community like Natal, which was a minority of a minority representing only a small section of that minority, compare it with any of their self-governing Colonies. He demurred at once to the contention of the hon. Member for Gravesend. As a Home Ruler he would be one of the last to interfere unnecessarily with any question concerning self-government, but one's withers were unwrung when one came to consider the case of Dinizulu. The hon. Member for Gravesend had said that he was not a lawyer. They had always recognised him as an authority on picturesque fiction. The hon. Member had given the House a good example of that to-night. Here was a man who was subjected to a so-called preliminary investigation. Had anybody heard of a preliminary investigation lasting for a period of six months? It was an abuse of the word "investigation"; it was persecution, a veritable Star Chamber inquiry. A kind of legal thumb-screw had been applied to this unfortunate man, who had very few friends and was surrounded by powerful enemies. He had not been allowed to bring his own witnesses from his native land to defend himself against the wild, vague, and random charges found in the Blue-book. He was charged with murder. Whom, he asked, had he murdered? Where were the names and particulars? Who was to prove it? They prostituted the name of justice by acts of this kind. The Natal Government had been spoken of as if it were a high-minded Administration, and at the same time they treated an untutored ignorant chief in this manner. He made no apology for condemning its conduct. By stopping his salary the Government prejudiced Dinizulu's case in the native mind, while they deprived him of the means of preparing his defence. His hands were tied behind his back. The Secretary of State for the Colonies replying to the Governor of Natal said, amongst other things—

> "I cannot but express my great regret that payment of Dinizulu's salary should have been stopped without the assent of the Secretary of State, seeing this action cannot be regarded otherwise than as a breach of the spirit of the conditions upon which he was permitted to return to Zululand and inflicts hardship on the prisoner, who is involved in much expense owing to the prolongation of the legal proceedings. . . . As the conditions clearly provide for the approval of the Secretary of State he is entitled to ask for an honourable observance of their terms. I feel bound to express my disappointment that your Ministers have treated a matter of this importance in which grave political questions, involving native interest and the good faith of the Colony, are concerned on purely technical grounds."

If he was still to undergo the thumb-screw process of preliminary investigation he might be pauperised in the meantime. If he was to be subjected to a continuance of physical and mental torture it might perhaps prove his destruction. The resources of civilisation were not exhausted. The Government, if they liked could easily provide money for Dinizulu's salary, and His Majesty's Ministers would have the confidence of the House if they demanded that he should be given a fair trial, and that the preliminary investigation should be brought to a speedy termination. As a last resort, he thought in view of what had occurred in regard to Dinizulu and martial law, the Government, representing the higher interests of justice, should refuse any act of indemnity to proceedings such as those which had been brought before the House.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House, at its rising to-morrow, do adjoin until Wednesday, the 10th June."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP ACT (ACCIDENTS).

Mr. GLOVER (St. Helens) called attention to the increase of fatal and non-fatal accidents under the Factory and Workshop Act, and moved a Resolution declaring that the increase was of such a character as to demand immediate attention, more particularly in so far as it bore upon the organisation of the Factory Department of the Home Office. He said he would give the House a few figures which would show the risks which workers in factories and workshops had to run. First, with regard to fatal accidents. In 1889, 871 persons were killed, and in 1907, 1,179, an increase in eight years of no less than 308. The following figures proved how non-fatal accidents had increased year by year. In 1897 there were 56,461; 1898, 76,789, 1899, 94,537; 1900, 106,724; 1906, 116,904; and 1907, 123,230. The increase, therefore, since 1897 was no less than 66,769. These figures, he thought, proved that the time had come when the Government should consider this question seriously and do all they could to prevent this loss of life and limb. He did not think it would be fair to the House to quote these figures unless he gave at the same time the figures showing the increase in the number of factories and workshops. In 1900 the number of factories and workshops coming under the Act was 233,312, and that number had increased in 1906 to 255,189. He contended that it was impossible for the present staff of inspectors and assistant inspectors to keep proper observation on such a vast number of workshops. Further, he did not think the inspectors and assistant inspectors were appointed in the best way. He was one of those who believed that if factories and workshops were to be inspected as they ought to be, the inspectors ought to be able to visit factories and workshops before accidents took place, and to see that everything had been done to protect machinery and so forth, instead of inspecting places where there had been loss of life and limb, for that occupied a large portion of the time of the inspectors. What kind of inspectors did they get at present? Simply men from colleges who had passed examinations, and who had no practical experience at all on the question of machinery. It was true that they had theory, but he suggested to the Home Secretary that it would be better to appoint men who had practical experience of the works and machinery they had to inspect. That would be a step in the right direction. He was not complaining of the way in which the inspectors who had been appointed were doing their work; what he said was that it was impossible for them to do the work of inspectorship in the way it ought to be done, if they had to do the clerical work, and all the other things connected with the appointments, while the total staff was so inadequate in number. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would consider this matter. He thought a Committee ought to be appointed to investigate the question of the appointment of inspectors. The result would be that they would be able to get men who would look more fully into matters than was done at the present time. He begged to move.

MR. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton), in seconding the Motion, said he did not wish to be too severe on the Home Secretary. He had no desire to make the right hon. Gentleman a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of other people. He was afraid, however, that he would have to point out to the House some of the shortcomings of the Department. It was said that the onlooker saw more of the game than the players, and that was especially true when the players had friends in the team. At present the State was spending a large sum of money ostensibly to protect life and limb in the factories and workshops of the country, but if figures meant anything at all, it would appear that the last thing the inspectors did was to carry out the duties they were appointed to perform. During the last ten years there had been an increase in fatal accidents of 62 per cent., and an increase in non-fatal accidents of 120 per cent. They might be told that these accidents were incidental to the carrying on of industry. He admitted that the figures looked prosaic, but to the workers they represented a chapter in tears and blood calling aloud for drastic action on the part of the Government Inaction laid an ugly charge on those responsible. They had been led to expect that, in the highly organised trades where things were better looked after, there would be an improvement in respect of accidents. What did they find? In the cotton industry between 1906 and 1907 there had been an increase of 37 per cent., in the woollen and worsted trade an increase of 100 per cent., and in the metal foundries an increase of 28 per cent. During the last ten years there had been an increase of 50 per cent. in the number of inspectors and assistants, and they had a right to ask what these gentlemen did. He quite admitted that there had been other factors in the increase of accidents in factories and workshops. There had been a large extension in the use of machinery in the retail trade. Many of the large emporiums had become factories, although they were not so registered. In some establishments they had machines driven by electricity, machines for stitching carpets, making sausages, cleaning currants, and mixing tea; and there were used in shops quite a number of power-driven machines which were unknown ten or fifteen years ago. Having made the full admission that there had been a large increase in the manufacturing centres of factories and workshops where machinery had been brought into operation, he still thought the system was wholly wrong. The increase in accidents, he believed, was due, not so much to machinery, but to the want of efficiency in those charged with inspection. He was told that certain Acts of Parliament had had the effect of bringing a larger number of workmen under the purview of the inspectors. It was commonly said outside that the Workmen's Compensation Act might have had something to do with the increase in accidents. It might, but he knew that in the organised industries the Workmen's Compensation Act had had the effect of weeding out old or middle-aged workmen, much to the disgrace of the employers. Again, they were told that there were more employed in factories and workshops than before. That was true; but, on the other hand, the number had gone down in some factories and workshops. There was a welcome decrease, however, in the number of accidents, according to the Board of Trade returns, during the last ten years, caused by the collapse of structures. That decrease amounted to 100 per cent.

What was more startling was that the number of accidents on railways had also decreased by 25 per cent. But it was a question whether that was due to inspection, or to the men doing their duty properly. At the present time there were 260,000 registered factories and workshops, and other places under inspection. It was a very simple calculation that six visits per day by 170 inspectors would enable them to visit once a year every registered factory and workshop. But, in answer to a Question, the right hon. Gentleman admitted that in 1907, 84,238 workshops and factories had not been visited, and that for two years 25,500 had never been visited at all by an inspector or an assistant. He thought that that was the high water mark of how not to do things. They had to come to cause and effect; and he would like to give what, to his mind, was the root cause of this alarming increase in the number of accidents in factories and workshops. The Home Office was the only Department which retained the old vicious system of patronage: the right hon. Gentleman had still the power of nominating the inspectors.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Examination after nomination.

MR. SEDDON said he would come to examination afterwards; but the examination in his opinion ought to be free and open, and every individual who had capacity ought to have the opportunity of taking part in the examination. He would like to outline very briefly what had been the changes made in the examinations during the right hon. Gentleman's tenure of office compared with the rules laid down by the Prime Minister when at the Home Office. The Prime Minister laid it down that while there should be a scholastic qualification, those who came up for examination should know something about machinery and factory law. The subjects in which the inspectors were examined had undergone a revolutionary change since the present Home Secretary came into office. It would be admitted that the knowledge of a factory inspector should embrace what was necessary for the protection of life and limb, and that the best men for such a duty were men who had a real practical knowledge of the work done in factories and workshops.

MR. GLADSTONE said that the changes made in the examinations of inspectors referred to by the hon. Gentleman were made in 1902. He only wished to make it clear that he had nothing to do with them.

MR. SEDDON said he would be very sorry to say anything about the changes which would be to the detriment of the right hon. Gentleman; but he thought that the old method was the best method, because it secured the appointment of men familiar with machinery.

MR. GLADSTONE said that they had appointed precisely the men who had an all round practical knowledge of machinery.

MR. SEDDON said that that was a debated point, but he thought the right hon. Gentleman would admit that a sound policy would be to have appointed men as inspectors who understood machinery. Here were some of the items in an examination paper set for the nominated candidates for an inspectorship—scholastic gentlemen, all-round men, as the right hon. Gentleman called them—he believed the right hon. Gentleman put the round men into the square holes—men of superior scholastic ability, much superior to the ordinary working man.

MR. GLADSTONE: I never said that.

MR. SEDDON: Here were some items in an examination paper—

> "If fifteen persons pass a given point each minute, how many pass in an hour?" "What is the price of 365 dinners at 1s. 3d. each?" "If five halfpennies weigh an ounce, what is the value of one pound weight?" "A horse was bought for £15 15s., and sold for £52 10s.; what was the profit?"

These questions were perfectly brain-racking for all-round men of scholastic attainments! Then the candidate was supposed to write an essay on such subjects as "Corporations have no Conscience"; "The Ideal Trade Union."

He was sure that could easily be done by a University don, or some coach who had been appointed an inspector of factories! There was a further test of the literary fitness of the candidate by a demand for—

> "A *precis* of eight pages of the evidence taken before the Commission appointed to report on the insurrection in the Sierra Leone Protectorate."

This for a candidate whose chief duty was the inspection of machinery! Could anything be more grotesque? But the flesh and blood of manual workers was so cheap, and inspectors were so superior! This was, however, not the limit; there were optional subjects, four of which only should be taken:—Literature, French, German, Italian, economics, physics, history, mathematics, chemistry. Not a word about factory law or sanitary law. The candidate might know all about economics and hardly be able to tell a horizontal from a vertical engine. The candidates' literary efforts, as laid down by the examination papers, were of the following order—

> "Outline the plots in any two of Shakespeare's tragedies and discuss the date of composition of each."

He did not know how a Baconite would get on there.

> "Distinguish between the miracle plays and the mystery, and point out the relation of these forms of art to the drama proper in the Elizabethan era."

He thought a better subject would have been how to work the oracle than to have worked out the relation between a passion play and a mystery. Again—

> "When, and under what circumstances, did Milton write "Paradise Lost," and with what fitness has it been described as the epic of Puritanism?"

He thought that if there had been any sense of humour at the Home Office, or a sense of the proportion of things, instead of writing on "Paradise Lost" the candidate might have been asked to write on Dante's "Inferno"—a monologue of our industrial slaughterhouses! The candidate was also asked to write notes upon one representative poem selected from the works of Gray, Chatterton, Burns, Keats, and some others. That was all right; he did not decry familiarity with the poets; but if they were going to make that a test of examination of the men responsible for safeguarding the lives of the workmen of this country, it was not, in his opinion, a very successful method. One could imagine the joy of an injured workman in the knowledge that the inspector who had never, or rarely, visited the factory where he was injured, could quote Keat's "Ode to Fanny," or the poem beginning with—

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,"

or his wife's calm resignation in getting 10s. allowance in place of £1 wages when she knew that the absent inspector was familiar with the classic poet who wrote and could quote with pathos, "Man was made to mourn." Those were only a few of the absurdities that were placed before the inspectors of factories. An assistant inspector might have some intimate knowledge of the work of a factory. Some had served their apprenticeship, some had been connected with the textile, some with the shipbuilding, and some with the lithographic trades. One had been a shop assistant. The last, if he was correctly informed, was not allowed to go where he could do most successful work. He was, first of all, appointed to inspect the sweating dens in the tailoring trade in the East End, but he was removed from there to Dundee, where he was put to look after the docks, and the dock inspector of Dundee was transferred to the East End to inspect the sweating dens. Whilst an assistant inspector might have knowledge of machinery, he was not allowed to inspect factories; that must be done by the inspector, the literary gentleman, who, however charming he might be for a holiday companion, was certainly not the person to inspect factories. He admitted there were a few instances where assistant inspectors might inspect factories, and that the female inspectors were allowed to go everywhere; but, as a rule, the assistant inspectors were not allowed to inspect factories. That was the most stupid part of the whole business.

Mr. GLADSTONE: That is not so.

Mr. SEDDON said he would be very glad to know that it was not as he had stated. If he was correct, never was there a more stupid and more nonsensical method of appointing inspectors. The indictment was that a case had been made out for immediate inquiry—not a Departmental inquiry, but one where they would get unbiassed evidence, so that this appalling death-rate might as far as possible be reduced. If the Home Secretary faced the facts, that would not be merely an academic debate, but would lead to a thorough and searching inquiry.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House is of opinion that the increase in fatal and non-fatal accidents in cases under the Factory and Workshop Act is of such a character as to demand immediate attention, more particularly in so far as it bears upon the organisation of the Factory Department of the Home Office."—(*Mr. Glover.*)

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire) believed it to be the fact that there were more accidents in factories and workshops during the last year than for any previous year for which they had Reports. If that were the case, the question was how these accidents could be prevented. He was not prepared to bring a general indictment against the Factory Department of the Home Office. He believed that that Department contained a large number of zealous and conscientious gentlemen, anxious to do their duty, though all were not of equal capacity. He had risen to make three suggestions. One was that in the interpretation of certain of the special rules in certain dangerous trades there was something still to be done. The grinding trade of Sheffield, for instance, was a most dangerous one. The grindstone was a dangerous machine, and was apt to fly suddenly. In cold weather people were apt to stand in front of the fire, and were sometimes killed or injured by a grindstone flying. The special rule should include, what it did not now, the suggestion made last year, namely, that a grindstone should not run in front of a fireplace, or three feet of either side of the fireplace. Dangerous machinery should be fenced, and heavier penalties should be inflicted where accidents occurred owing to its not being fenced. On a previous occasion he had drawn attention to a case in which a boy got entangled in a roller and killed. The inspector had warned the firm on three occasions to fence the machinery, yet when the case came before the magistrate, instead of being fined the maximum amount of £100, the firm was only fined £5. He was bound to say that his right hon. friend might consider the advisability of circularising the magistrates in such a gross case as that. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion had given instances of the kind of examination papers set. He had quoted two or three arithmetical questions which were so simple that any school board child could answer them; and he had instanced some difficult questions about the drama, the Elizabethan poets, Keats, and Milton, which very few hon. Gentlemen could satisfactorily answer. It was not very difficult to make merry over an examination paper, but the question was whether it was wiser and better to have factory inspectors drawn from the educated classes or to have young men who had gone into the workshop or factory at the earliest possible moment. If he were asked his opinion, he should certainly say that learning was not a dangerous thing in regard to factories and workshops; but among the compulsory subjects there ought to be such subjects as mechanics. The compulsory subjects were English composition and arithmetic; and there were the following nine optional subjects: English literature, English history, general modern history, French or German or Italian, mathematics, economics (including knowledge of the history of industry in modern times), chemistry. physics (including mechanics), and practical mechanism. Instead of having all those optional subjects, they should make one of them compulsory. He could not help feeling that that would be a reasonable thing. In the case of women there were the same compulsory subjects, and two groups of optional subjects, precisely the same as those for men with the exception that "physiology and bacteriology" was substituted for "practical mechanism." He could not help thinking that it would really be a reasonable thing to suggest that one or two of the optional subjects should be made obligatory or compulsory. He realised the danger of introducing into the Department a large number of young men who were wholly ignorant on all subjects connected with mechanics and chemistry, and unqualified either in the law relating to factories and workshops or in sanitary science as applied to factories and workshops. He agreed that it was a good thing that they should know French or German. In these days there was a great deal of international work, and we had a lot to learn from our neighbours across the Channel. It was of great importance that the inspectors should make themselves conversant with what had been done on the Continent for the protection of life. His right hon. friend, he believed, was not responsible for the invention of the present syllabus; he succeeded to it, but no syllabus was final and he did not think this was final. Serious accidents were no less than 357 every working day, and he felt sure his right hon. friend would view the matter in a grave light and give it his earnest consideration.

Mr. HARWOOD (Bolton) supported the Motion as one who was associated with trade and who had watched the problem for a great many years. He was sure no one's feelings required to be aroused on the matter; they all felt that the number of accidents was nothing less than appalling. There was the line—

> "Peace hath her victories no less than war."

And it might be transposed to read "Peace hath her slaughter, not only no less than but also much more than war." They had to ask themselves, quite practically and calmly, what could be done to diminish accidents. The changes and chances of this mortal life could not be entirely eliminated, but he hoped everyone would admit that the percentage of accidents was quite beyond what it ought to be and was a grave reflection upon something in our industrial life. The first thing one would be inclined to say was that it was a reflection upon our mechanical inventors that they could not, with all their skill and knowledge, find the means of making the dangers less. He did not, however, think the evil really lay there. He could speak of his own trade. He had been watching the matter for many years, and there had been a great many inventions which had largely diminished the number of accidents. He did not exaggerate when he said that in his own trade by the equipment of factories with the newest safeguards the evil had in twenty-five years been diminished to quite a quarter of what it was. Why, then, in face of these inventions had they this appalling total? It was not because many of the accidents could not be prevented, but because there was no efficient system for securing that safeguards should be applied. He would not for a moment reflect upon the factory inspectors, because so far as he had had experience of them, and it had been considerable, he had found them exceedingly capable and devoted public servants; but they were asked to do what was impossible, and he rose to make a practical suggestion which he thought might do something, if not a good deal, in the direction of diminishing this evil. His experience was that the man who made a good, capable, and efficient factory inspector for the routine business was quite incapable of dealing with the problem so far as safeguards for the protection of life were concerned. That was a most difficult task, and required a knowledge of machinery and of mechanical life, and it wanted a specialist. Whether the ordinary factory inspector could quote Keats or not or anything of that kind, he was quite certain when they got him, whatever form of examination they had, he would not be capable of dealing with this difficult and technical problem. The suggestion he would make was that there should be a division of the work of the factory inspectors. There should be a certain number of them looking after the routine work of seeing that employers obeyed the law, and some specialists, whose sole business it would be to go from place to place seeing that there were all the safeguards that were required. He could give the House hundreds of cases which had come under his own knowledge where safeguards which had been known for years had not been applied. There was no adequate system of going from factory to factory and from top to bottom of them seeing that everything that ought to be was guarded. Everyone knew that was so. The factory inspectors did their best, but it was quite beyond their capacity. There should be specialists who went all over the country certifying factories, before they could be worked, as electric omnibuses were certified before they could run. A factory ought to be certified that it was provided with every reasonable safeguard for the protection of the rights of those who worked there. He thought they would then have a different record from at present. He did not believe that in Lancashire one factory in fifty was gone through from top to bottom. An inspector went in and saw something catch, but that was not enough. Reference had been made to accidents owing to clothing being caught in shafting. It was a common thing, but nothing was ever done to prevent it. There were means of safeguarding against accident, but he had never heard of them being compulsorily applied. He would suggest that they should begin by a systematic plan and appoint a special staff of proficient technical inspectors to go through every factoryin the country from top to bottom and see that they were provided with all safeguards that could be obtained. It would make a marvellous difference. These things were invented, and there were hundreds of them hardly ever applied. Machinery for cotton mills, for instance, was now made with many safeguards, and in new mills they were put in as a matter of course, but there was no system of compelling them to be put in old mills. The Home Secretary should see that it was a duty to do so. He might say it was part of the inspector's duty, but it was no use asking them to discharge duties which they could not possibly perform. The task had been neglected in the past and they had arrears to make up, and he hoped that that discussion would waken them up. They had a new problem that they must face if they wished to avoid the scandal of the present position. He need not say that the pain, sorrow and suffering that came from this was far more than was caused by Waterloo or by any battle, but nobody took any notice because the groans were not heard, and there was nothing romantic or poetical about it. But it was none the less real, and he begged the Home Secretary to tackle it as a question by itself, and tackle it completely, and he believed an enormous improvement would be made.

Mr. GLADSTONE, who was indistinctly heard, said he had listened with much attention to the speech of his hon. friend. He was rather surprised that it never seemed to have occurred to him that there were many men who had given their lives to the study of this question of factory inspection. He seemed to think a sudden difficulty had arisen at a certain moment when everything was wrong, and that it was absolutely necessary to start a new system. The hon. Member proposed, he understood, to divide the staff into two sections, and these men were somehow to start afresh and go through the 250,000 workshops and factories in the country. He was sorry to say the hon. Member opposite seemed to have a tendency to put words into his mouth which he had never said. The hon. Member denounced the system of inspection which he gathered was largely responsible for the accidents which had occurred. Having demonstrated to his satisfaction the absolute incompetence and inaction of the inspectors, he proceeded to condemn the system under which they were chosen and the examination which they had to pass. The hon. Member instanced the system of examination of 1892 for which he was responsible as Under-Secretary, and held him to be a villain because in the last two years he had sanctioned the operation of a new scheme of examination. But that had nothing to do with the question under discussion. They had appointed a certain number of gentleman as probationers, but they were in training. They were under the guidance of the senior men. Naturally they did not send a raw hand alone to a workshop. He knew something about examinations. So did the hon. Member for Leicester, and he did not think his speeches, if he might respectfully say so, were quite in accord with the knowledge he had on the subject. For ten years he was a victim of examinations himself, and he knew what examination papers were on almost every subject, from the point of examiner and examinee, and he said emphatically that they could never judge of the efficiency of an examination by looking at the papers alone. It depended on the examiner who understood the questions he put and could differentiate between the answers given. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. The real question the House had to consider was this, did the examination and the system of nomination for the examination produce good men or did it not? If it could be shown that the system was not producing the right men, he would be perfectly ready to change it to-morrow, and that was a matter which the two hon. Gentlemen who had spoken had not touched on at all. It seemed to him, judging by the speeches which had been made, that the qualifications for factory inspectors at present were some knowledge of Keats or Shakespeare. He had explained the matter over and over again, but the hon. Member had not paid any attention to what he and his colleague had said during the last two or three years. He was sorry he had not made better use of his opportunities. No man advanced his argument by omitting the essential parts of the case against which he was arguing. The hon. Member had quite omitted to tell the House what the system really was. The system in 1892 which he had eulogised was based upon two main subjects, sanitary science and factory law. The hon. Member seemed to think that mechanical engineering was a compulsory subject. It had never been a compulsory subject at any time. They found that under the old system candidates went to special examiners, crammed up the two subjects to the full extent of their brain capacity, and then went red-hot to the examination and discharged their brains on to the paper. After carefully considering the matter he had proposed a new scheme, that there should be first of all an initial examination, based on certain optional subjects, and that those who came out highest, and who were appointed inspectors, could then for a period of two years be probationers. During these two years they would be attached to a district, and would be able to have practical experience of questions of factory law and sanitary science, or mechanics, or any other special branch in which they happened to be interested. Then at the end of the two years there was a final examination, in which they would be really tested in these questions before they were made inspectors. He thought the hon. Member for Leicester would admit that there was a great deal to be said for this. They set up an examination which would attract and bring in all-round men. It had been said that the nomination system was altogether wrong, and that everybody who applied ought to be allowed to enter for examination. If that plan were adopted, before long hundreds of men who had to earn a living would present themselves for examination. More examiners would be required, and the cost of examinations would be increased, while the only advantage which he could expect to result would be that a great deal of trouble would be spared the Home Office. The Department would register all applicants, and those unhappy people would come up in tribes for examination, and go back to their occupations sadder and wiser men. All the fools under the sun seemed to think they were qualified for posts of this kind. Experience would prove that the system of open examinations, were it adopted, was a mistake, and he had no intention of making that mistake unless he was compelled. With regard to the inspectors, one was a University man from poor old Ireland, another was a lecturer in engineering, another a Whitworth exhibitioner, one was an engineer, and another an electrical engineer. The last one came from Kent, and he was selected for work in the Home Office as secretary to the chief inspector. That was the type of men they were getting in recent appointments and it was much too soon to say what sort of work they would do as full-blown inspectors. They, at any rate, had nothing to do with the alleged failure which had been attached to the inspectors, and the new men could not have had any influence at all upon the number of accidents. He was pleased to say that factory questions in this House had never been allowed to degenerate into party matters, and they never produced acrimonious discussions. He had not the slightest reason from any point of view for meeting this Motion with an unsympathetic negative. The issue before the House was of the highest importance, and he would neglect no opportunity to effect an improvement in regard to the condition of affairs of which complaint was made. Since he was bound to defend his position in the matter, he would remind hon. Members that he was the first to draw the attention of the House of Commons to the number of accidents in factories. He not only spoke on this matter, but acted, and started in his Department a close survey of the whole inspectorial organisation. By a plan formulated in the latter part of last year the staff had been largely reorganised. The work of each district was examined with regard to the number of visits paid and places not visited, and the general condition of industry in each division and the results of inspection up to date. On the diagnosis of each district fresh additions to the staff were made. There were some slight alteration of areas, but the number of districts remained the same, while the south-western division was created. At headquarters, although the work had enormously increased in recent years, no addition had been made to the staff. The chief inspector was literally smothered with business, especially during the session. They devised a scheme of devolution, and appointed a second deputy chief inspector and a second medical inspector. With the sanction of the Treasury they had appointed sixteen new inspectors, five lady inspectors, eleven inspectors' assistants, and had made a correspondingly clerical increase both at the Home Office and in the inspectors' offices. He believed that this would have a very considerable effect, and would give the heads of the Department more time to consider the general question of organisation and disposition of the work. It was unfortunate that there had been a deficiency of strength on the headquarters staff, for if Dr. Whitelegge had been relieved of some of his duties he would have been able to have done fuller justice to the larger questions of organisation in connection with the whole work of the Department. He wished to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the number of persons employed in factories in late years had decreased. Owing to the conversion of workshops which employed a small number of people into factories the average number of persons per factory was diminished.

MR. SEDDON asked whether it was intended to include those large establishments which were commonly known as shops, but which were practically engineering works.

MR. GLADSTONE said that many of the large places were workshops now. The second important point was to ascertain how far the increase in accidents had been actual and not nominal. In recent years there had been a considerable increase in staff of factory inspectors, and the consequence was that more accidents had been brought to light. That was one possible cause of the increase reported in any given year. There was a still more important point in relation to this question. He would only give one illustration. The figures in regard to burns and scorchings had increased from 3,365 in 1906 to 5,823 in 1907. That was explained by the fact that there was a new definition introduced as to the kind of accidents which were to be reported. There were other kinds of accidents which, according to the Returns, had increased, though the apparent increase was due to the Returns being made up in compliance with the requirements of the new definition. He did not wish to shield his Department from any responsibility in this matter, but there was another reason for the apparent increase in accidents upon which everybody was agreed. There was no doubt that the effect of the Workmen's Compensation Act was to produce a return of a larger number of accidents. This inflation of accidents was found after the Acts of both 1898 and 1906. It was only natural, but the serious part of it was how far the employers and workmen became rather more careless through the knowledge of insurance on the one hand and of compensation on the other. No amount of supervision by factory inspectors could check that. Factory inspectors could do, and had done, a great deal in insisting upon the fencing of machinery; but there came a point when their power failed. The figures for accidents had disturbed him last year. They were disturbing him more this year. All reported accidents in the decennial period 1899–1908 showed an increase of 116 per cent., and in the two years 1905–7 of 23·5 per cent. That was a serious matter, and, after allowing for the expansion of trade, overtime, and whatever considerations of that sort there might be, they could not disguise from themselves the fact that the accident rate was higher than ever. What disturbed him, too, was that the increase was specially serious in some trades. The non-fatal accidents in the two years 1905–7, for instance, showed an increase of 44·75 per cent. in the textile trades, which were supposed to be comparatively safe, and 46·07 per cent. among metal founders, while among the engineers the increase was 35 per cent. and among the workers with power-driven machinery 30·59 per cent. Fatal accidents were a more reliable guide, because they were not subject to the circumstances he had named, the fluctuations of trade, and so on. They showed an increase during the ten years 1899–1908 from 727 to 1,179, or 62 per cent., and the increase during the two years 1905–7 was 10·9 per cent. It was interesting to note that the increase in fatal accidents had been comparatively steady, but not considerable in amount. The numbers in the last eight years were: 1900, 1,045; 1901, 1,035; 1902, 1,110; 1903, 1,047; 1904, 1,018; 1905, 1,063; 1906, 1,116; and 1907, 1179. He would give the ratio per thousand factory workers of fatal accidents for the last ten years; it was: in 1898, 143; 1899, 117; 1900, 201; 1901, 188; 1902, 105; 1903, 180; 1904, 165; 1905, 177; 1906, 181; 1907, 193. That gave a pretty fair idea of the ratio of fatal accidents to population; but having regard to the efforts made during the last ten or fifteen years to prevent accidents this steady increase was very disappointing. He thought that with all the efforts made one way or another they ought to have diminished the number of accidents rather than increased them. He had said enough to show how the accident rate was rising. There had been an extraordinary increase in the number of non-fatal accidents and a steady increase in the number of fatal accidents. He passed for a moment to the question whether that was an argument against the efficiency of the inspectors. Nothing had struck him more inside and outside the House than the apparent inability to realise the ramifications, the complexity, the intricacy, and the vastness of the duties imposed on the inspectors. It was the supervision of the industrial condition of 5,000,000 of workmen, employed in thousands of different trades, carried on in 110,000 factories and in 147,000 workshops, under numerous Acts of Parliament relating to factories, workshops, truck, sanitation, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and innumerable rules and regulations made under these Acts. The factory inspectors had to do justice to the work of 5,000,000 workmen, without unduly harassing the employers. In every district legal points were constantly arising. He asked the House to remember that what was wanted in an inspector was a practical man—with knowledge, capacity, and aptitude to apply the law which he administered, which gave much more trouble than the mere work of inspection. The inspectors had got continually to study legal points although, of course, they consulted also the Home Office. His belief was that the factory inspectors had shown a great deal of shrewdness in performing their duties in connection with the interpretation of the laws which they worked out. In addition to that, hundreds of new factories and workshops were established every year; there were new inventions, new machinery, new processes, new industrial instruments. The practical man might be very good perhaps in designing some fence for machinery with which he was familiar, but he might not work in every department of a great establishment. There were thousands of men who worked all their lives in their own shed and had no knowledge of any of the processes carried on in other sheds and shops.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): An engineer would have a fair knowledge of the machinery.

MR. GLADSTONE said that that was not all. An engineer might have a knowledge of the methods of carrying on the work and he might be able to see that those were carried on properly. That was a most important point, but how much would he know of CO^2 in a particular shed, and that was quite as important, if not more so. The ordinary workman might know nothing about ventilation, or supposing he did, he could not know how it could be carried out scientifically. There were about 10,000 different trades in the country. A man who was master of one would be as much at sea in regard to the 9,999 other trades as the graduate of Dublin University or Oxford and Cambridge. What would he know about caissons, or law, or electricity, unless in the latter case he were an electrical engineer? It was not sufficient to say that a man was a practical man because he had worked at a machine all his life. He looked upon a practical man as a man with a head on his shoulders, which enabled him to take a reasonable and practicable view of all trades, whether he had been engaged in them or not; a man who was able to take his case into Court and argue it. Would, say, a practical fitter be able to take a case into Court and conduct it? His education would have been of another kind, and he had not had the chance of acquiring the necessary education for that kind of inspector's work. With all these difficulties growing up, the inspectors had struggled with them, though they might not have been able to get through with them all. He admitted that the Department was understaffed and the only thing that could be done was for them to get through as much necessary and important work as possible. Having had experience of more than one Department he did not believe that more honest and able work was done in any Department than was done in the Factory Department. Hon. Members talked of the system as being idiotic, ridiculous, and absurd, and said the inspectors were not properly trained and did not know their duty, and that the result was very largely a failure. If that was so, why was it that no case of particular failure or shortcoming had been brought to his notice during the two or three years he had held his present office? He courted—he almost challenged—inquiry. Special examinations had been held into various by-tracks of industrial life, some large and some small. Fresh precautions were taken every year and, indeed, every month, and if hon. Members could point out where improvements could be made their suggestions would be welcomed. Referring to the feeling of disquiet regarding the number of accidents, he said he would welcome an impartial inquiry which, he thought, might be valuable. He did not mind whether the Committee were a Departmental Committee or a Select Committee; the former was handier; but the latter would probably command greater confidence. A reference which would, perhaps, cover the issues raised that night would be a reference to inquire in what classes of factories and workshops an increase in accidents had taken place, into the causes of such increase, and what further legislative and administrative measures could be taken for the prevention of accidents.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD said he wished to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on the concluding part of his speech. He could assure him that, although they criticised him, sometimes in a way which he felt to be rather severe, they thought it was better in the interests of factory workers, and of the efficiency of his Department, that they should thrash out matters across the floor of the House instead of nursing them in their bosoms. The inquiry the Home Secretary had promised would do very much to clear the air and would tend to reduce the appalling number of accidents, both fatal and otherwise, which were continually occurring. The right hon. Gentleman would be well advised in deciding upon a Select Committee, for, although a Departmental Committee had certain great advantages, it had the extreme disadvantage that it did not carry with it the same confidence as an expert Select Committee. He hoped, the reforethe right hon. Gentleman would appoint a Select and not a Departmental Committee. This promise had really made further speech-making almost unnecessary, because, as he understood it, the reference to the Committee would cover everything they wanted. He therefore, advised his hon. friend who moved the Resolution not to press it to a division. He thought the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and especially the concluding portion of it, was on the whole satisfactory, and met all they wanted, but he might briefly go over the ground traversed by the right hon. Gentleman in order to justify the position they had taken up during the last two years. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that there had been serious failures in his Department, but he did not admit they were owing to any inefficiency in his staff. They did not want to deprive him of the credit of having attempted at any rate to remedy some cases. It was unnecessary for them to pile up individual cases. Their charge against the Department was not a charge to be proved by individual cases, but by general results, and one of the general results was that there was an ever-increasing total of fatal accidents. He thought the right hon. Gentleman was a little bit hard on his hon. friend with reference to the examinations. Surely, the hon. Member's meaning was perfectly clear. His argument, as he understood it, was that there were deficiencies in the Factory Department. Everybody admitted them. The right hon. Gentleman and his predecessor admitted them; and they both said the remedy was to change the system of examination. Personally, he thought it was a great improvement to have a probationary period. He had been firmly convinced ever since he had studied the matter that there should be a probationary period, but whether it should be inaugurated by an examination of increasing difficulty from the literary point of view, and of decreasing stringency from the practical point of view was another matter altogether. It was perfectly true that before they became full inspectors they had yet to pass an examination in factory law and in sanitary science, but the point was how they got the opportunity of passing the examination. If they passed an examination in literature, French, economics, history, etc., they would get the opportunity of passing the further examination. He knew a little, though not nearly so much as the right hon. Gentleman, about examinations; and if one wanted to cram for an examination, he would cram in literature, French, economics, and history. The preliminary or sifting examination was such as to select the type of man who crammed in literary subjects. His hon. friend who moved the Resolution condemned this change, and he was right.

MR. GLADSTONE said the candidates had to undergo a searching test at the Home Office in the first instance.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD said that various private secretaries had come to him from time to time on this subject, and had given him to understand they were selecting for nomination. A system of personal inspection by unknown, undefined, and undefinable persons was not exactly proper as the first sifting process in such a matter. The right hon. Gentleman had laid great emphasis on the necessity of the inspector knowing the factory law. He asked what practical working man was capable of appearing in the Law Courts and mastering all the details of the factory law and the Workmen's Compensation Act. Surely the right hon. Gentleman had forgotten that the most successful operators and manipulators of that law were the workmen themselves. There was no class of men in the country who knew more intimately the details of the industrial law of the land than trade union secretaries. The fact was that when men with common intelligence set their minds upon a special field of life they would very soon put into the shade the flashier man who had passed even with distinction in examination papers such as had been quoted. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that gentlemen of a certain description had been selected under the new syllabus. These descriptions were most misleading things. A science master, Dublin University lecturer, and engineer—these were the descriptions. Really, they might mean a great deal and they might mean nothing at all. If they took the nine names before those the right hon. Gentleman had read, and judged their capacity and their qualifications by their occupations and professions, they got still better qualifications. They had a science master, a lecturer, a civil engineer, another science master, an engineer and lecturer on engineering, a science lecturer and scholar of Magdalen College, the manager of a school furniture works, and factory inspector's assistant analyst and oil works manager, and so on. But it was very difficult indeed to find from this Return from which the hon. Gentleman quoted any information regarding the qualification and capacities of factory inspectors from the descriptions entered opposite their names. If the hon. Member for Berwick or anybody else thought they were in favour of factory inspectors with no education they were profoundly mistaken. It was not a question of whether they should be educated and cultured men or not. The whole question that divided them was what tests were to be imposed. How were they going to test whether a particular candidate was a man of education and culture? He was sure the right hon. Gentleman would find that his cook was a better cook if she was a person of general culture. For instance, it was as necessary that a cook should read French as that a factory inspector should, provided the cook was to be up-to-date, and there was a great deal of common sense in imposing that test. But supposing the right hon. Gentleman asked his cook to pass an examination in Virgil's Æneid! That was their case about factory inspectors. By all means let them have educated and cultured men, but let them have men whose education and culture was not of a nature which first of all was no indication of their capacity as factory inspectors and, secondly, was of a nature which barred large classes from ever becoming factory inspectors at all. Were the tests satisfactory in view of the work that was to be done? The right hon. Gentleman said Yes. They said No.

Mr. GLADSTONE said this system was tentative, and he had never said it as perfection. They had improved it.

*__Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD__ said they were quite unanimous in that corner of the House that the factory inspector should be tested. Surely the inspector's assistant's work gave an opportunity for a test. Time after time they had urged the Education Minister to dovetail the new Imperial College of Science and Technology, which was going to be established mainly by public money, into the polytechnic and monotechnic system; but he refused, and was going to dovetail it into the London University. That was an educational matter which would have to be discussed on the Education Vote. He mentioned it, however, to show that they had a clear and consistent conception of technical and scientific education which ought to be used as a ladder up which candidates for the factory inspectorship should climb. Let them link up their educational institutions from the lowest form of elementary school through the polytechnic and monotechnic on to colleges like the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and then impose a test of education given in these institutions upon factory inspectors, and not a single one of his friends would oppose it. But the right hon. Gentleman was going in an opposite direction. He was going through the secondary school, through the college — literature, economics, history, French—and he occasionally brought in a Whitworth scholar or exhibitioner to make the plan presentable. He was perfectly willing to admit this. If at the Home Office there was always a staff of men who made the selections impartially, with full knowledge and with almost superhuman penetration, that would solve all their difficulties, but until they had some guarantee that some sort of superhuman agency was in operation they really must insist upon the ordinary methods of open competitive examination. Let them draw their papers up in such a way that they made use of their boy with his workshop experience acquired whilst attending the polytechnic, supplement that by theoretical scientific training at the monotechnic or Imperial College of Science. If that result was secured, not by nomination, but by the method of examination, all their difficulties were satisfied and they were prepared to place as much confidence as they humanly could upon the results of the system. He understood that the reference to the Committee would be so widely drawn that, of course without allowing the Committee to sit upon the Factory Department, without inviting it to sit as a Court to decide whether the Factory Department was good or bad it would be able to take evidence upon the efficiency of the Factory Department as at present organised for the particular work it had to do. If the reference was drawn so widely, they could bring before the Committee all the voluminous evidence they had from employers, workpeople, and ex-factory inspectors—experience that had been accumulating for a considerable time past on the work—the efficiency on the one hand and the inefficiency on the other—of the Department for which he was responsible. They accepted the Committee and were exceedingly grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for having promised to appoint it. They would do everything they possibly could to co-operate with him in producing evidence before the Committee and giving him their experience and the experience of their constituents, and they hoped and prayed that the result would throw fresh light upon this awful problem and reduce the appalling total of accidents.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said the hon. Member who had just sat down had said that Departmental Committees did not carry the same amount of confidence as Select Committees.

*MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I only meant in regard to a subject like this.

LORD BALCARRES said that upon that point he frankly differed from the hon. Member for Leicester. What was the composition of a Select Committee? Fifteen members were chosen primarily because they belonged to the different political parties. They might be excellent men, but they would not get fifteen men as well qualified as they would if they had the whole House to choose from and had the assistance of experts and other officials, whose services would be placed at the disposal of a Departmental Committee. On a question like this they would never get a Select Committee to agree, and such a Committee would limit their choice of experts and *personnel*, They would also enhance the difficulty of securing a unanimous Report, which was a very germane consideration when such Report had to be followed shortly by legislation or departmental changes. The increase of accidents in the immediate past was so serious that delay was undesirable. They could not get a Select Committee appointed for six or eight weeks, and it would have to adjourn until the autumn session. On the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman could pick out three or four Members within the next ten days, who, in a fortnight, would choose experts, the Committee could sit forthwith, it would not rise with this House, but could go on sitting at any time. A Select Committee could not possibly report before 1911, and that was a very material consideration. He hoped the Government would keep an open mind on this question and not forget that there were considerations which made it desirable that a Departmental rather than a Select Committee should be appointed.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he wished to support what his noble friend had said. This was an extremely important question. He had not sufficient knowledge of the subject to enter into a discussion of the point whether the Home Secretary or hon. Members below the gangway were right upon the matter, but he had had considerable experience of the House and he was quite sure that a Select Committee would be the very worst tribunal to send a subject of this kind to. As his noble friend had said, it was necessary, if this Committee was to do any good, that it should sit at once. It was perfectly clear that all the Members of the House, or at any rate a majority of them, were overworked, and their time was fully occupied. If they had a Select Committee chosen by the Parliamentary Secretary and the Whips, the result would be that there would be a certain number of Members appointed representing the different views in the House, and he questioned whether any of them would have any expert knowledge. There would probably be two hon. Members from below the gangway, and possibly they might have expert knowledge, but he did not think that everybody in the House would agree with them. As the Home Secretary had pointed out, mere mechanical knowledge was not sufficient to give a correct and reliable opinion upon a subject of this kind. He very much doubted whether in the whole of the House of Commons they would be able to find more than one or two experts upon this question. A Departmental Committee could have experts placed upon it, and it would approach the subject without any bias. He had served on a good many Select Committees, and he challenged contradiction when he said that Members did not attend. A sufficient number appeared to make up a quorum. He did not wish to make this a party matter, for his own side was quite as bad as the other. A quorum being made up, evidence was gone into, and over and over again, when a question came to be voted upon, Members came in to vote, though they knew nothing of the evidence. That was not a satisfactory condition of things, and, therefore, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see that a Departmental Committee was appointed.

Mr. GLOVER asked leave to withdraw the Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

LUGGAGE (DEFINITION) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Sir F. Banbury.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Thorne.*)

Sir F. BANBURY said that this was a Bill brought in by a private Member, and the House at present was not in possession of its details. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading had not explained the measure, and he would undertake to say that there was not a Member on the other side of the House who knew anything about the contents of the Bill. [An Hon. Member: It is a very good Bill.] The only thing good about the Bill was its extreme brevity. The greater part of it was taken up by the preamble, and there were only two clauses in it. The first clause stated that the words "personal luggage" should include bicycles. [An Hon. Member: Why not?] He was going to say why not. In the Law Courts Mr. Justice Channell had given a decision in a case where the question was whether a bicycle was personal luggage. The learned Judge held that personal luggage was something which could be carried in a box, and was necessary for a traveller to take to provide for his wants and comforts when from home. It was perfectly evident that a bicycle could not be held in the hand in a box. Mr. Justice Channell held that a bicycle was not personal luggage.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday, 15th June.

POLICE (WEEKLY HOLIDAY) BILL.

Read a second time.

Bill committed to the Select Committee on Police Forces (Weekly Rest-Day).—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 4th June, 1908.

The House met at Twelve of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Great Western Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1 Bill) [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendment.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read a second time and ordered to be considered upon Thursday next.

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Lanarkshire Tramways," presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered (under Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 260.]

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Greenock; and Rushden; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Tipton, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Rushden, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Battersea, Blackford Bridge (two); Bradford; Braintree and Bocking; Bury (two); Cwm y Glo; Deri; Fachwen; Ford; Great Horton; Llanfairfechan; Llansamlet; Mawgan; Mumbles; Nelson; Penmaenmawr; Pontardulais (two); Runcorn; Swansea; and Trefriw; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Two petitions from Greenock; in favour; to lie upon the Table.

MANGENA, ALFRED.

Petition of Alfred Mangena, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Manchester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MERCANTILE MARINE (SIGHT TESTS).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of the Board of Trade upon the Sight Tests used in the Mercantile Marine for the year ended 31st December, 1907, [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD, SCOTLAND.

Copy presented, of Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Lancaster, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain Classes of Shops within the Urban District of Great Harwood [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the City of Worcester, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the Hours of Closing for certain Classes of Shops [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Memorandum on Special Rating for School Purposes in Quebec and Ontario [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Supreme Court (Rules).—Copy of Rules of the Supreme Court, dated 3rd June 1908 [by Act].

Supreme Court (Rules) (Patents and Designs), 1908.—Copy of Rules of the Supreme Court, dated 3rd June, 1908 under the Patents and Designs Act, 1907 [by Act].

Crown Office Rules.—Copy of Rules under the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907 [by Act].

Mail Ships Rules, 1908.—Copy of Rules of Court under the Mail Ships Acts, 1891 and 1902 [by Act].

Merchant Shipping Rules, 1908.—Copy of Rules of Court for Appeals under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906 [by Act].

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.

Address for "Return showing the number of Experiments on Living Animals during the year 1907, under licences granted under the Act 39 and 40 Vict., c. 77, distinguishing the nature of the Experiments (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 151, of Session 1907)."—(*Mr. Herbert Samuel.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Germany and the Bagdad Railway.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Germany has obtained a concession for the prolongation of the Bagdad railway as far as Helif, including a branch to Aleppo; and whether they have acquired chief interest in the Smyrna-Cassaba line, thus blocking the British Smyrna-Aidin line.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The Imperial Ottoman Bagdad Railway Company have a concession, granted in 1903, for constructing a railway, with branches, from Konia to Bussorah, and recently an iradé has been issued sanctioning the allocation of certain revenues as kilometric guarantees of the extension in question. A majority of shares in the Smyrna-Cassaba line is, it is believed, held in Germany. But this does not imply any damage to the Smyrna-Aidin railway, of which an extension has been sanctioned lately.

Messrs. Webster and Post Office Van Work.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the Postmaster-General whether any of the horses supplied by Messrs. Webster, Limited, for collecting His Majesty's mails have been sent back during the last two months as unfit to do the work, and, if so, how many; whether any have been stopped working by the inspectors of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; whether there is any clause in the contract with this firm stipulating the age and general conditions as to fitness of the horses used; whether there are any Post Office officials charged with the duty of inspecting the horses; and whether, in the case of delay to His Majesty's mails arising from horses being stopped from working by the inspectors of the above society, the Post Office has any remedy, and, if so, what it is.

MR. COOPER: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that, since the Post Office required the London contractors to increase the wages paid to the mail drivers, Messrs. Webster, Limited have discharged the horse cleaners at several of their yards, and required the mail drivers to dress down and clean all the horses' harness and vans they use, or to pay a man to do it; whether he is aware that the mail drivers employed by Messrs. Webster, Limited, are told that the Post Office contract with this firm does not allow any time for meals, and that mail drivers are working continuously eight and nine hours without a break or time allowed for a meal; whether there is any agreement or understanding that all drivers should be allowed reasonable time for meals; and, if so, will he see that the contractors shall be required to observe this rule.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will make inquiry on the points raised by the hon. Member, and will send him a reply.

Delay in Publication of Vivisection Returns.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the reason for the delay in the publication of the Return of Experiments on Living Animals for the year 1907; and when it is proposed that such Return shall be published.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) This Return has been moved for to-day, and it should be ready for distribution soon after the Recess, if not earlier. This would be a little later than the date of publication last year, but somewhat earlier than in 1906. There has been no avoidable delay. Difficulties are always liable to arise in the collection of a number of separate Returns.

Register of Scottish School Teachers.

MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Scottish Education Department has prepared a register of teachers in secondary and intermediate schools; if so, whether he will state under what Act of Parliament this has been done, what is the object of the register, into what classifications the teachers have been divided, on what principles the classification has been made and whether it is final, what is the significance of the new designations adopted, what means were taken to ascertain the views of the head-masters or school managers about the capacity of those teachers under their charge; what facilities are provided for teachers to rise from a lower to a higher rank; and whether a teacher has any appeal against the decision of the Department.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) It is the duty of the Department to frame regulations for the administration of the annual sums voted by Parliament for the service of education in Scotland. These regulations, which include stipulations as to the qualifications of teachers to be employed as a condition of grant in certain classes of schools or for certain subjects, are contained in various codes and minutes of the Department which do not come into force till they have been laid before Parliament for a specified time. The expenditure, in accordance with the regulations, of the sums voted is sanctioned by the Appropriation Act of each year. By Article 43 of the Regulations for the Preliminary Education, Training, and Certification of Teachers, issued in 1906, a certain standard of attainment was set up for the future as a qualification to teach certain "higher" subjects in intermediate and secondary schools. But due regard was had to the interests of existing teachers, and Article 42 of the regulations provided that the standard of attainment specified in Article 43 should not apply to teachers who were serving in recognised positions in intermediate or secondary schools at the date of the regulations. It was desirable for administrative purposes that the Department should have as complete a list as possible of those teachers who, on the ground of previous service, were exempted from the requirements of Article 43, and it was also desirable that teachers who were in any doubt on the point should, on application, be definitely informed by the Department whether or no their claims to having occupied a recognised position in an intermediate or secondary school before the date of the regulations were admitted by the Department. A list of such teachers is accordingly in process of compilation. The "recognised position" held by the applicant at the date of the regulations is entered thereon in accordance with the statement made by the teacher on his form of application after verification from the returns of school staff made annually by the managers. If there is any error of fact in the entry it can be corrected on the production of suitable evidence, and arrangements will be made for recording automatically from the returns made by the managers the future service of teachers in any recognised intermediate or secondary school. It is important to note that, under the foregoing arrangements, the exemption of any teacher from the requirements of Article 43 as regards future eligibility for appointment to the staff of a school earning grants as an intermediate or secondary school depends solely upon the fact of his past service, and not at all upon his name being entered upon the Department's list. Such service may be proved at any time as occasion arises. It is to be noted further that in recording the names of teachers who have given service in a certain position the Department expresses no opinion as to the attainments of such teachers or as to their relative fitness for giving instruction in "higher subjects" as compared with others whose names are not so recorded. The list which they are compiling does no more than record ascertained facts as regards the previous service of teachers in intermediate and secondary schools. Two further concessions in the interests of existing teachers were made in the issue of the regulations for the preliminary education, training, and certification of teachers for 1908, and in the regulations as to grants to secondary schools for the same year: (1) The date at which Article 43 should become operative was postponed till 31st July, 1909; (2) it was made clear that all teachers certificated before that date should be eligible for appointments to the staff of intermediate and secondary schools at any time, so far as the Department's regulations were concerned, irrespective of attainment, and whether they had previously served in an intermediate or secondary school or not. In the latter case, however, as the Department has no means of judging from the past record of work of the teacher as to his fitness for giving instruction in any higher subject, a probationary period of one year after appointment is required.

Strength of the British Troops in Egypt.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the present numerical strength of the Army of Occupation in Egypt, and what was it in May, 1907, and in May, 1906, respectively.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) It is not considered expedient to publish the present strength of the British troops stationed abroad. The figures for the last three years were as follows:

1st May, 1905 - -	5,471
,, 1906 - -	4,010
,, 1907 - -	5,726

Position of Tenants on Mr. Bustard's Estate.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the tenants on the estate of Mr. Bustard, near Dunkiverly, County Donegal, upwards of forty in number, having served originating notices to have second-term rents fixed, ejectment decrees at the suit of their landlord, who is largely indebted to them for work and labour, have been obtained against several of these tenants for the purpose of keeping them from obtaining the benefits of the Land Act and depriving them of interest in their holdings; and whether, having regard to the fact that Mr. Bustard is an absentee, holding a large grazing ranch of upwards of 1,400 acres in a congested district, which he has refused to sell for distribution among the holders of small and uneconomic farms, and the dispute existing between his tenants and him, steps will be taken for the intervention of the Estates Commissioners in this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that it is a fact that some forty applications served by the tenants to have judicial rents fixed for either a first or second term are pending on the estate of Mr. George Bustard. The hearing of these cases is to be commenced on the 11th instant. The Commissioners have no knowledge of the ejectment proceedings referred to. No proceedings for the sale of this estate under the Act of 1903 have up to the present been instituted. I will ask the Estates Commissioners to consider whether the case is one in which they might usefully offer their services as conciliators under the regulations.

Sir George Coulthurst's Tenants.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state over what portions of the estate of Sir George Coulthurst, County Cork, the 100 tenants, as stated by the Estates Commissioners, who have not yet signed purchase agreements are distributed; whether the Commissioners have received protests from three tenants named Robert

Byrne, Thomas Henderson, and Andrew Forrest, of Ardrum, Inniscarra, against their exclusion from the general purchase; is he aware on what grounds it is proposed to deprive these tenants of the benefits of the Land Purchase Act, and can he state what consideration the Estates Commissioners propose to give to their claims; and whether he will take steps to prevent landlords excluding tenants from a sale without any reference to the will or wish of the Estates Commissioners.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The documents referring to the estate in question are at present in the hands of the Estates Commissioners' inspector for the purpose of inquiry and report. The Commissioners are consequently not in a position to give the particulars asked for in the Question, but the points raised in this and the hon. Member's previous Questions on the subject will receive full consideration from the Commissioners before they sanction the advances applied for.

Mr. M'Carthy's Contract with the Caherciveen Rural Council.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Samuel M'Carthy entered into a contract with the Caherciveen Rural District Council to lay down six-inch pipes between the reservoir and the Protestant church gate, which has not been completed; whether the case was brought under the notice of the Local Government Board; if so, how much money has Mr. M'Carthy drawn from the district council in connection with the contract, and was the solicitor to the council consulted as to the liability of Mr. M'Carthy to complete his contract; and will he explain why the engineer has certified that the contractor has carried out the work necessary to enable him to draw the whole of his money, seeing that there are still 270 yards of this contract unfinished.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The replies to the first two parts of the Question are in the affirmative. The contractor has been paid £365 8s. in connection with the contract. It is the fact that the solicitor to the council was consulted as to the liability of the contractor to complete his contract. He advised that the contractor was legally bound to complete the entire work. According to the records of the Local Government Board the engineer has certified for £365 8s., being the value of the work already done by the contractor, out of £389, the total amount of the contract.

Evicted Tenants Reinstated in County Kerry.

MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of evicted tenants in Kerry reinstated in their own or other farms up to May, 1908, with the total amount of grants for building and stocking; the number reinstated under the provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act; and the number of applications and reinstatements in the Dingle Rural District from November, 1903, to May, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Up to the date mentioned 253 evicted tenants or their representatives have been reinstated in the County Kerry, and free grants amounting to £3,882 have been sanctioned. The Estates Commissioners are not able to state the number of applications and reinstatements in the Dingle Rural District, as their records are not kept by rural districts. The Commissioners have taken steps under the Evicted Tenants Act for the acquisition of land in the County of Kerry, but they are not yet in a position to restore any tenants in the county under that Act.

Brown and Nolan's Reader in Irish Schools.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Brown and Nolan's Advanced or Sixth Reader was sanctioned for use in a number of National Schools in Ireland, some of which are attended by Protestant pupils; and whether, seeing that considerable anxiety exists among the parents of these children, he can see his way to lay all the documents relating to the matter upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to the Answer which I gave to a similar Question put by the hon. and gallant Member for East Down on 20th May. The book in question was not sanctioned by the Commissioners for use in National Schools and, in all cases in which it has come to the knowledge of the Commissioners that the book was in use, they have called on the managers to have such use discontinued. No good purpose could be served by laying the documents relating to the matter upon the Table of the House.

Rev. E. L. Loughrey and Irish School Teachers.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, in pronouncing judgment in the case of Harrington *versus* the Justices of Londonderry, Mr. Justice Gibson commented severely on the action of the Rev. E. L. Loughrey, P.P., in ordering Mr. Harrington, the teacher, to violate the Board's rules, and if he is aware that the same manager has dismissed several teachers in his parish for a similar offence; and what steps, if any, are being taken to prevent a manager from dismissing teachers for no offence other than carrying out the Board's rules.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have no information as to the learned Judge's remarks in this case beyond that which may be gathered from the newspaper reports. The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they are aware that the Rev. Mr. Loughrey has disemployed several teachers during the past few years, but they have no information as to the cause of the disemployment in most of the cases. The Commissioners have directed their chief inspector to hold an inquiry under Rule 46 in connection with the attitude of the manager towards their rules as reported in the Press.

Amalgamation of Ballyhaskin, Ballyferris, and Tullycavey Schools.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the National Commissioners of Education have received a memorial protesting against the amalgamation of Ballyhaskin, Ballyferris, and Tullycavey National Schools; and whether, in view of the fact that Ballyhaskin School is the oldest and largest of the three and at present in a flourishing condition, together with the fact that the residents of Ballyhaskin are prepared to erect a new school at their own expense and in accordance with the plans of the Board, he can state why the Board have refused this offer, seeing that the children of this school will have to walk over two miles if the scheme of amalgamation is carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they have received a memorial protesting against the proposed amalgamation of Ballyhaskin, Ballyferris, and Tullycavey National Schools. These schools are all small schools in the same locality under Presbyterian management. The average attendance of pupils for 1907 were:—Ballyhaskin, 36; Ballyferris, 15; and Tullycavey, 32. The buildings are unsuitable, and the Commissioners have decided to sanction a grant for the erection of a schoolhouse in a central position distant about 1½, 1¼, and 1 mile respectively, from the present sites, and to withdraw recognition from the existing schools on the completion of the new building. The managers of Tullycavey and Ballyferris are in favour of the scheme, and the Commissioners consider that the educational interests of the locality will be best served by replacing the three schools by one well equipped and suitably staffed school.

Sale of the Estate of Porter and Crosslee, at Cookstown.

Mr. KETTLE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any progress has been made towards completing the sale to the tenants of the estate of Porter and Crosslee, in Cookstown Union, County Tyrone; whether, since the refusal by the Land Judge of the offer made by the Estates Commissioners, a fresh inspection has taken place; what is the difference between the latest offer of the Commissioners and the demand of the Land Judge; and whether, in view of the manner in which proceedings with regard to this estate have been protracted, he will take steps to effect completion of the sale.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to the Answer which I gave to the hon. Member's previous Question on 28th April. The Estates Commissioners have not yet received their inspector's report of the second inspection of the estate, but the inspection is proceeding and there will be no avoidable delay in dealing with the matter.

Irish Councils and the Upkeep of County Roads.

MR. KETTLE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that several county councils in Ireland have been surcharged in respect of expenses incurred for the upkeep of small country roads; what are the limits of the powers of the county councils in regard to the small roads; and whether, in view of the utility of these by-roads in many cases as connecting links between main roads, and of the fact that without any enlargement they serve a most useful purpose, he will take steps to remit the surcharges and to extend the powers of the county councils in this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Members of several county councils in Ireland have been surcharged in respect of expenditure upon roads which are not public roads. The powers of county councils as regards expenditure on roads are limited to public roads. Before deciding whether expenditure on other than public roads should be confirmed or remitted, the Local Government Board always take into consideration the circumstances in which the expenditure was incurred and the merits of each particular case. As at present advised the Government do not consider it necessary to extend the powers of county councils so as to enable them to repair private roads or by-roads not used by the public.

Indian Railway Finance Report.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India when will the India Office Report on Indian railway finance, which was laid upon the Table on 11th May and ordered to be printed, be circulated to Members.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Report has been issued to-day.

Classification of Post Offices.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the units of work and Board of Trade index numbers which governed the classification of the Post Offices of Welshpool, Newtown, Llanfyllen, Montgomery, Llanidloes, and Machynlleth, and if the classification of these officers has been decided.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The final classification of the offices referred to has not yet been decided. I hope to be able to make an announcement on the subject soon.

Scale of Pay at Enniskillen Post Office.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether any steps have been taken to revise the scale of pay and allowances of the employees of the Enniskillen Post Office in accordance with the recommendation of the Departmental Committee; and, if not, will he give the matter his early attention.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The whole question of classification is eng ging my attention, and I hope to make an announcement on the subject shortly.

Belgian Cement at Kingston Post Office.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can now state what has been the result of his inquiries with reference to the use of Belgian cement at the Kingston Post Office; and what steps he has taken to prevent the future use of inferior cement.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The inquiries are not yet completed. The engineer-in-chief is in communication with the contractor; and, as soon as his answer is received, I hope to be able to send the hon. Member a reply. I am considering how best to prevent the possibility of an inferior cement being used in cases such as this.

Income-Tax Dispute at Newtownards.

MR. SLOAN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if a person whose total income from all sources is under £90 is liable to pay income-tax on interest paid last September on foot of a mortgage on property, the mortgage of which has since been paid off; if he is aware that the surveyor of taxes at Belfast and the collector at Newtownards have served final notice for payment on a person in Newtownards for payment of income-tax, although they have been informed that the total income is less than £90; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Under the Income-Tax Acts the person paying mortgage interest is liable for the duty applicable to the interest, which he is entitled to deduct upon making payment to the mortgagee, thus throwing upon the latter the burden of the tax. In the case of exempt persons, Section 163 of the Income-Tax Act, 1842, expressly excludes from the scope of the exemption any duties which they are entitled to charge against any other person. In the present instance, therefore, the claim is in accordance with law, and I see no reason to interfere.

Taxes on Tea and Sugar.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state the total amount of taxation on tea and sugar since 1st April, 1900.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The total amount of duty received from taxation on tea and sugar, from 1st April, 1900, to 30th April, 1908, was £93,686,710.

Co-operative Trading Societies.

MR. REES: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Government would appoint a Select Committee or Joint Committee of both Houses, in pursuance of the recommendation made by the Departmental Committee of the Treasury, to inquire into the practice of co-operative trading societies registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, who trade with persons other than their own members, in contravention of Section 24 of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, and pay no income-tax on such trade.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I will consider my hon. friend's suggestion.

Liquor Licences and Death Duties.

MR. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Paper ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 14th May, 1890, setting forth the practice of the Inland Revenue Department in dealing for death duty purposes with the various interests connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors, and in which it is assumed that the licence will continue to be renewed, was issued before the case of Sharp and Wakefield was decided in the House of Lords; if this Paper was superseded by another Paper, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 3rd May, 1904, in which the practice of the Inland Revenue Department in dealing for death duty purposes with the various interests connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors is stated to come within the general rule applicable to all property, namely, that the value for death duty purposes is the amount it would fetch if sold in the open market at the time of the death of the deceased; if he is aware that the first named Paper has been reprinted for sale to the public in order to meet the heavy demand for the Paper and with the date 1908 upon it; if he is aware that it is being circulated in the country as if it was still in force; and if he will take steps to have this superseded Paper withdrawn from circulation; or dealt with in such manner as may prevent the public being misled as to the practice of the Inland Revenue Department.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The Paper in question was issued prior to the decision in the case of Sharp *v.* Wakefield and before the passing of the Finance Act, 1894. The practice of the Board of Inland Revenue is correctly set forth in the Paper of 1904 to which my hon. friend refers. I am aware that the Paper of 1890 has been reprinted by the Stationery Office, and, though its interest is mainly historical, I see no sufficient reason for withdrawing it from circulation.

Army List—Crimean Officers.

Captain FABER: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that the letter W was placed in the Army List against the names of officers who fought at Waterloo, and P against Peninsular officers, he can cause the letter C to be placed opposite the names of officers who fought in the Crimea, in memory of their services to the country.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is considered that in view of the full statements of the war services of officers which are now shown in the quarterly Army List it is not desirable to adopt this proposal. The initials "P" and "W" were shown in the Army List against the names of officers who served in the Peninsular and at Waterloo because no general statement of war services were then included.

Reduced Fares for Territorial Soldiers Travelling to Duty in Plain Clothes.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that members of the Territorial Force, travelling in plain clothes to or from drill or musketry, are no longer able to obtain railway tickets at military fares on producing a voucher from the adjutant of their unit; and whether he will take steps to secure for the Territorial Force the same privileges in this respect which were enjoyed by the Volunteers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Return tickets at the single-journey fare are issued to officers and men of the Territorial Force, not in uniform, when travelling for rifle or target practice but not for drill. It has not hitherto been the practice of railway companies generally to extend the privilege of cheap tickets to Volunteers when proceeding to drill not in uniform, but some companies did give that privilege. The railway companies have recently been approached with a view to obtaining this privilege generally, but negotiations are not yet complete and the result of their deliberations is not yet known.

Pay of Territorial Quartermasters during Annual Training.

Mr. COURTHOPE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the period of commissioned service performed in the Regular Forces will be taken into account in fixing the scale of pay to be received by a quartermaster of the Territorial Force during annual training in camp.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is intended that the minimum rate for a quarter-master of the Regular Forces viz., 9s. per day, shall be paid in all cases.

Peterhead Volunteers and the Territorial Forces.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether it has come to his notice that certain members of the Volunteers at Peterhead have refused to join the new Territorial Forces as a protest against the refusal of the Government to remedy pension grievances of ex-naval and military Civil servants, who complain that they obtain no recognition whatever of their naval or military services on superannuation from the Civil Service; and whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps to remedy this alleged grievance of ex-naval and ex-military Civil servants.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Nothing is known at the War Office of the matter mentioned in the first part of the Question. As regards the last part of the Question, I would refer my hon. friend to the reply given by my right hon. friend, then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, to a similar question put by the hon. Member for the Tower Hamlets on 8th February last.

Cadet Officers and Officers Training Corps.

Mr. D. DAVIES (Montgomeryshire): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will consider favourably a modification of the Army Order of 16th March with reference to officers' training corps, which will enable members of existing cadet corps to compete in 1908 for the advantages to be gained under Certificate A, as it is intended they should do in 1909 and subsequent years.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The paragraph referred to (Paragraph 18 of Army Order of 16th March, 1908) has been modified in the sense indicated in the Question. The first examination for Certificate A will be held before the end of 1908 for cadets of the senior division, officers' training corps, and an examination for Certificates A and B in both divisions in May, 1909. The above provisions have been inserted in the Regulations for the officers' training corps, which have just been approved by the Army Council, and which will be issued very shortly.

Supply of Table Telephones.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state for how long the Post Office has been unable to supply table telephones to customers; what is the reason for this inability; when they will be able to resume the supply; and where these instruments are purchased.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The supply of table telephones for subscribers to the Post Office telephone system in London was unfortunately not equal to the demand for about a month recently. This state of affairs has now ceased.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Willenhall Drill Hall—Socialists and Sunday Parades.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the drill hall, Willenhall, was refused for the holding of Socialistic meetings on any date, and that a letter was received from Sergeant - Inspector Evetts on 30th April, 1908, stating that he had received instructions that he was not to let the drill hall for Socialistic meetings; and whether he will take the necessary steps to give equal treatment to all parties.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): As I informed the hon. Member, the general officer commanding reported that this drill hall was on one occasion refused to a Socialist party for the sole reason that it was proposed to hold the meeting on Sunday. No mention was made of the letter referred to, and I will ask the general officer commanding for a further report.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): May I ask if they have church parades on Sundays?

MR. HALDANE: Sunday is the day for church parades.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of abolishing church parades altogether, considering how useless they are and how disliked they are by the Army.

[No Answer was returned.]

Army Clothing Contracts.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, as the War Office has no knowledge of the rates paid by the County Associations for the new service jackets and outfit, he will get the same, as there is fear of sweating existing in these accepted tenders.

MR. HALDANE: I fear I could not justify the interference with the action of the Associations which the hon. Member suggests. I have no reason to think that the action I am now taking in informing the County Associations of the Fair Wage Clause will not produce the desired result.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of a document issued from the War Office to cavalry clothing officers dated 1907 in which contractors are instructed to charge 3s. 8d. for making service dress jackets and 5s. 6d. for other jackets?

MR. HALDANE asked for notice.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: You contradicted it yesterday.

Contracts Committee.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can say how many persons constitute the Contracts Committee, and how many tailors are there upon that body; and whether he can say when they were last employed.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member's Question is not understood. There is no such body as the Contracts Committee.

Trades Secrets Clause of the Factory Act.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the trades secrets clause of the Factory Act is inserted in all Army clothing contracts and not in any other store contracts; whether the tender price of each garment is the trades secret covered by that clause; and whether it is included for the purpose of frustrating any efforts to discover sweating by the Government.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member has been misinformed. There is no clause in Army Clothing Contracts relating to trades secrets.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I will supply the right hon. Gentleman with the information.

Grants to County Associations.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any other grant of money to the County Associations besides the grant for rent of property and buildings, and the initial clothing grant of £4 8s. for mounted recruits and £3 15s. for dismounted, and personal equipment, and the annual grant of 23s. per efficient for the upkeep and replacement of the outfit, the outfit consisting of two suits, one of which must be the service dress and great coat, and the usual personal equipment: and whether the Associations' expenses are covered in the above amount or aided by subscriptions.

MR. HALDANE: The Associations receive various other grants, among which is one for general administrative expenses—and out of this latter grant they provide for their own expenses.

Writers of the Ordnance Pay Department.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he has concluded his inquiry into the rates of pay granted to writers of the Army Ordnance Department at out-stations; and, if so, with what result.

MR. HALDANE: This inquiry is in progress.

Petitions by War Department Employees.

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, in view of the statement that the regulations prohibiting the submission of petitions by civilian employees of Army Departments are not maintained in practice, he will cause the regulations to be so amended as to make the submission of such petitions clearly permissible, in order to put War Department employees on an equal footing with employees in His Majesty's Dockyards and the Naval Ordnance Department.

MR. HALDANE: Steps will be taken to amend the regulations to provide for the forwarding of petitions through the proper authorities.

Army Ordnance Department Writers.

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, seeing that the writers of the Army Ordnance Department at out-stations were not required to pass an examination on entry, and the omission to do so was therefore no fault of their own, he will take steps to see that these clerks are not now penalised for not passing such an examination; and will he consider the claim of these writers to have their rates of pay revised with effect from the 1st April, 1907, thereby putting them on a more equal basis with the writers in His Majesty's Dockyards and Naval Ordnance Department.

MR. HALDANE: The points raised in this Question are being considered in the inquiry which is being conducted.

Downpatrick as a Training Depot.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is yet in a position to state the result of the inquiry by the military authorities into the suitability of Downpatrick as a depot for the training of preliminary drill recruits of the Special

Reserve during summer and winter; and whether the officers selected for the duty of making the inspection had brought to their attention the accommodation existing in the town of Downpatrick and the proximity of Ballykilnar camp for rifle practice and camp training.

MR. HALDANE: I have nothing to add to the information which I have already given to the hon. and gallant Member on this subject.

Natal Act of Indemnity.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can give an assurance that the assent of His Majesty's Government to an Act of Indemnity for Natal will not be given before the House of Commons has had an opportunity of discussing the subject.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby). Perhaps my hon. friend will address this Question to the Prime Minister after Whitsuntide.

Egyptian University.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether a sum, amounting to some £E26,000, has been raised in Egypt by voluntary subscription for the endowment of a University, the only condition imposed by the subscribers being that a charter should be given to the institution constituting it a really national University; and, if so, whether His Majesty's Government is prepared to advise the grant of such charter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I have no information beyond that contained in paragraph 65 of Sir Eldon Gorst's Report for 1907, where the scheme there referred to is described as important and far-reaching, and as one to which the Government will give every assistance and encouragement in their power.

Egyptian Constitution.

MR. KETTLE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that a petition, bearing 45,000 signatures, was recently presented to the Khedive by Mohammed Farid Bey, leader of the Egyptian Nationalist party, praying him to grant the Egyptian people a constitution and a parliament having control of domestic affairs; whether the Khedive consulted Sir Eldon Gorst as to his competence in this regard or as to the reply which he should give to the petitioners; and what was the Khedive's reply.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have received no information on the subject.

Royal Visit to Russia—State of Reval.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, when the Foreign Office fixed upon Reval as a meeting place between His Majesty the King and the Czar of Russia, it was known that in April of this year twenty-five political prisoners were tried at the port of Reval, five of whom were subsequently executed and six more sentenced to hard labour; and whether, under the state of unrest which these circumstances reveal, he will propose that some other place be chosen for His Majesty to meet the Czar.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have no information which leads me to suppose that a state of unrest exists at Reval which renders it undesirable for the Sovereigns to meet off that port.

Russian Raid in Persia.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has now received any information on the subject of the recent raid by Russian troops into Persian territory; whether three Persian villages, namely, Beliasuver, Zargar, and Jevad Kent, were burned by the Russian commander, entailing the destruction of a considerable number of houses and great loss of life; and whether, in view of the fact that under the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention Great Britain and Russia mutually engaged to respect the integrity of Persia, His Majesty's Government were consulted by the Russian Government prior to the violation of the Persian frontier by Russian troops.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have received no further official information on the subject of the Russian military operations on the Persian frontier since answering the Question which the hon. Member asked on 25th May. His Majesty's Government received no communication from the Russian Government regarding their intentions or proceedings in connection with these incidents, and do not consider that any such communication was necessary, since the despatch of a temporary punitive expedition, after violation of Russian territory, cannot be said to constitute a violation of the integrity of Persia, or to be a matter in which British interests are at all concerned.

Mr. LYNCH asked whether the Anglo-Russian Agreement was not in the nature of a contract between two States respecting our relations with a third State, and was not the right hon. Gentleman consulted by Russia in a matter of this grave importance.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Does not the Agreement merely refer to commercial relations?

Sir EDWARD GREY said that a matter of this kind would not come under the Convention at all unless it affected the integrity of Persia.

Mr. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): If a similar incident had happened on the Afghan frontier would the attitude of the Government have been the same?

Sir EDWARD GREY: That is not a proper parallel.

Press Freedom in Egypt.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Egyptian Government intends to prosecute certain newspapers in that country who have recently affirmed that the Government of the Soudan has, in connection with the recent disturbances there, been guilty of conduct contrary to the usage of civilised nations.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have no knowledge of any such intention on the part of the Egyptian Government.

Mr. ASHLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Egyptian *Standard* the other day published a statement to the effect that after putting certain prisoners in irons the Egyptian Government massacred them, and is there not——

Mr. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman has just said he has no information.

Visit of His Majesty to Russia—Position of Sir Charles Hardinge.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in what capacity will Sir Charles Hardinge, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, accompany the King on his visit to Russia; and what provisions, if any, have been made for the discharge of his duties at the Foreign Office in his absence from this country.

Sir EDWARD GREY: Sir Charles Hardinge, formerly Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and now Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, will accompany the King to Russia as a member of His Majesty's suite. The same arrangement will be made for the discharge of his duties at the Foreign Office as have been made on previous occasions when he has been absent abroad or on leave.

British and Russian Relations.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government will, having regard to the state of Russia, consider the propriety of suspending the diplomatic relations between Great Britain and that country.

Sir EDWARD GREY: This subject is to be debated this afternoon, and I shall have an opportunity of making a full statement on it.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what will be the effect of the *status* of the British Ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg of the visit of the King to Russia; will his office during the royal visit be in abeyance or will he discharge its duties; and, if so, will he communicate with the King, and, if so, in what capacity, or with the Foreign Office, and, if so, in what capacity.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The same Answer applies to this.

Anglo-Russian Agreement.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what explanation he has to give for the delay in making public the Anglo-Russian Agreement regulating the relations of Great Britain and Russia in Asia till the day after the prorogation of Parliament last autumn, and the postponement of Parliamentary criticism on the terms of an Agreement on which Parliament was neither advised nor consulted.

SIR EDWARD GREY: It was not possible either to conclude or to publish the Convention sooner than was actually done. It was therefore impossible to give an opportunity for discussion on the subject at an earlier date than that actually chosen.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked whether the Agreement was not published the day after Parliament rose.

SIR EDWARD GREY replied in the negative. The Agreement was signed within a short time after Parliament rose, but it was considered undesirable to publish the Convention until its contents had been communicated to Persia and Afghanistan, which were neighbouring countries. He did at one time express the hope that it would be concluded before Parliament rose, but it was not found possible. He stayed in town for that purpose after Parliament rose. Of course, he was aware that the publication at the time it did take place would have the appearance of having been purposely delayed till after Parliament had prorogued, but that really was not the case.

North Sea Fisheries.

MR. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he opened negotiations with the Powers interested in the North Sea fisheries as to the closing of the Moray Firth to foreign trawlers; and, if not, when he expects to do so, and what is the cause of the delay.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am not in a position to add anything to the Answer returned by me to the hon. Member for the Elgin Burghs on the 5th ultimo, and I cannot answer the last part of the hon. Member's Question without consultation with the Departments concerned, who, I understand, are now considering the matter.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): What foreign Powers have been communicated with?

SIR EDWARD GREY: None. I am in communication with the Departments concerned to see what they really want.

In reply to Sir GEORGE DOUGHTY (Great Grimsby),

SIR EDWARD GREY said that foreign Powers could only be approached through the Foreign Office.

Excise Officials and Politics.

MR. SNOWDEN: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he is now able to give the result of his promised inquiry into the question of the legality of the action of the Board of Inland Revenue in imposing restrictions on the political freedom of the Excise outdoor officers; and, if there are statutory powers for such action, will he state what Acts of Parliament give the Board this power.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The political disabilities formerly imposed by law upon excise officers were removed by Act of Parliament in 1874. The Board of Inland Revenue, however, regard a too active participation by excise officers in political affairs as interfering with the due performance of their duties, which bring them into close personal contact with the public; and such cases are dealt with under the general disciplinary powers exercised by the Board in pursuance of the Statutes creating it.

MR. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that certain Excise officers have been removed from one place to another for taking part in a political movement?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Certainly; I am quite aware of it. I know the case referred to, and as far as I have the facts before me—and I looked into the matter this morning—they fully justify the action taken.

MR. SNOWDEN: How would membership of a political organisation interfere with the due discharge of their duties by these men?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: This is rather a different Question, but I must say I do not think there ever was a time when these officers should be kept free from political controversy, especially as Parliament is handing over to them very large Government patronage amounting to £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 a year.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether members of the National Old-Age Pension Trust, Congleton, who are in receipt of 10s. per week subject to a deduction of 2d. for postage, and who are otherwise qualified to receive old-age pensions, will be entitled to receive the proposed Government old-age pension.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Yes, Sir.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether it is intended to apply any similar standard of income to persons, not of the working classes, who apply for State pensions in future?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am unable to follow the Question.

AN HON. MEMBER: Ex-Cabinet Ministers.

Transfer of Excise Officials to the Customs.

MR. SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the names of the distinguished officials who approve of the proposed transfer of the Excise Department of the Inland Revenue to the Customs; and is he aware that the late Mr. Gladstone in 1888 expressed a strong opinion to the contrary, and said that the Excise and not the Customs should be the dominant authority in any amalgamation.

I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in proposing to transfer about 3,000,000 establishments and other licences from Inland Revenue officers to local authorities, consideration has been given to the effect on the usefulness of such officers of the loss of work which brings them into daily contact with the general public; and whether consideration has been given to the advantage, from the standpoints of efficiency and economy, of employing the same men to inquire into claims for old-age pensions as are employed in dealing with establishment and other licences.

I beg further to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the authority on which it has been decided that the work of investigating 500,000 old-age pension claims by Inland Revenue officers will be equivalent to the work now performed by such officers in connection with about 3,000,000 establishment and other licences which it is proposed to transfer to the local authorities.

Finally, I desire to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the establishment and other licences which it is proposed to transfer to the local authorities were in 1867–9, etc., transferred from the local authorities to Government officers on the ground of the unsatisfactory way in which the work was done and the loss to the revenue from evasion; is he aware that Boards of Inland Revenue have repeatedly condemned the employment of local officials for revenue purposes, and that their action in taking the work out of the hands of such officials was justified by the large increase in the number of cases brought to charge within two years, amounting to 20, 30, 40, and under one head to 155 per cent.; and will he make further inquiries before going back on the proved policy of the Board.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is not usual, nor, in my opinion, is it desirable, to state in the House the name of any permanent official whose advice may be asked on a particular question by any of His Majesty's Ministers. Responsibility for policy rests with His Majesty's Ministers alone, but my hon. friend may rest assured that the particular decision in question was not reached until the advice of the permanent officials concerned had received full consideration. I may add that, when the change which is contemplated has been effected, there will be no dominant authority in the amalgamation, which is merely a matter of administrative convenience in working the Customs and Excise services under one board. All the other points raised by my hon. friend have been fully considered by His Majesty's Government.

Anthrax at Bradford.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to a fatal case of anthrax which recently occurred at Bradford, as the result of handling foreign wool which had been treated with a disinfectant which did not disinfect; and whether he has under consideration the propriety of adopting a legal standard of efficiency for disinfectants.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I beg to answer this Question on behalf of my right hon. friend. The hon. Member presumably refers to a case which happened on the 8th March last, and as to which I answered a Question by the hon. Member for West Bradford on the 31st March. The hon. Member however has, I think, been misinformed as to the circumstances of the case. According to the reports which I received, the deceased had been employed on the wool before it was immersed in the disinfectant. Disinfection is not required by the regulations, but the firm in question voluntarily wash all material in a disinfectant liquid, and I understand that the disinfectant used by them is one of the three which the Bradford Anthrax Investigation Board have reported effectually destroys anthrax bacilli and spores. The question of disinfection is receiving constant attention.

Punishment of Whipping.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the fact that the Criminal Appeal Act, read in concert with the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, deprives a Judge of the power of sentencing a prisoner to whipping, in cases in which previously to the passing of the former Act such punishment could be awarded, he proposes to take such action as will leave the powers of Judges in this behalf unimpaired.

MR. GLADSTONE: I am aware of the difficulty that has arisen in carrying out a sentence of whipping under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885, since the passing of the Criminal Appeal Act. Nothing could be done to remove this difficulty except by legislation; but the number of cases under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, in which sentence of whipping is passed, is small, not averaging more than four a year.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he was aware that it was repugnant to the feelings of a great many people in this country that sentences of flogging should be inflicted.

MR. GLADSTONE: I am quite aware that that feeling exists. At the same time I may point out that in consequence of what has taken place, the prisoner who could not be whipped received a sentence of eighteen months imprisonment.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: The right hon. Gentleman says the average of sentences is only four a year. Is he not aware there were fourteen at the recent Cardiff Assizes?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am referring to cases under this particular Act.

Chinese Opium Smokers at Cardiff.

MR. ROBINSON (Brecknock): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the prevalance of opium smoking by Chinese in seamen's boarding houses at Cardiff; and whether, in view of the attempt now being made to suppress opium dens in some of our Crown Colonies, he will take steps, by legislation or otherwise, to prevent the growth of this practice amongst a numerous and increasing Chinese population in some of our leading seaports.

MR. GLADSTONE: My attention had not previously been drawn to the matter, but I find on inquiry that there is a certain amount of opium smoking in boarding houses at Cardiff kept by Chinese and used by Chinese seamen and firemen. I fear I cannot give any promise of legislation on this subject.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): Will the right hon. Gentleman have inquiries made both in Cardiff and London as to the existence of opium dens?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes; I know they have existed in the past and will inquire as to the extent they now exist.

Corporal Punishment in Workhouses.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will have a stringent clause incorporated in the Children Bill now before the Committee forbidding any official in workhouses, or in other ways in charge of pauper children, to inflict any corporal punishment which involves the removal of any article of clothing, except solely in the presence of two independent witnesses, and that fellow officials should be rigorously excluded from the position of witnesses.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have consulted the President of the Local Government Board on this matter, and I find that the Local Government Board have power to make regulations as to the punishment of paupers in workhouses. For this reason, as well as because it is somewhat outside the scope of the Bill, I do not propose to deal with the matter in the Children Bill.

Brixton Prison.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average amount each debtor prisoner at Brixton Prison has received during the past six months; and what amount of work has been performed on Post Office bags by prisoners at the said prison.

MR. GLADSTONE: The average amount per head received by debtor prisoners at Brixton during the last six months was 10s. 9d. About 2,220 mail-bags were made up by debtors at that prison during this period.

Disciplinary Punishment in Brixton Prison.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is aware that a debtor prisoner at Brixton prison was sentenced to two days on bread and water diet by the deputy-governor at Brixton prison for sending out a letter to a friend asking if he could obtain him some work; and whether he will consider the advisability of extending the privilege of sending letters in such cases.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have made inquiry and find that a debtor prisoner was sentenced to two days No. 1 diet for breaking the rules by writing a letter on lavatory paper and passing it to a prisoner who was due for discharge. The Prison Rules provide that a debtor may write and receive one letter in each week, and that the Visiting Committee may for special reasons allow additional letters to such reasonable extent as they may consider desirable. If the prisoner in question had applied for a special letter for the purpose specified in the hon. Member's Question instead of attempting to enter into clandestine communications the application would no doubt have been granted. I do not see any sufficient grounds for extending the privileges with regard to letters granted by the rules.

Police Commission.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Report of the Police Commission may be expected.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Commission inform me that the final revision has taken longer than was expected, but they expect to have their Report ready for submission to the King soon after the Whitsuntide Recess.

Nottingham Hippodrome Fatality.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that on 18th May last, John Power, a bricklayer's labourer, while engaged in building operations in connection with the Nottingham Hippodrome, lost his life by falling when wheeling a barrow-load of mortar on a scaffold 40 feet high; whether his attention has been called to the suggestion of the Builders' Labourers' Trade Society of a guard placed at the edge of a scaffold to prevent such accidents; and will he take such measures as shall prevent similar accidents in future.

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, Sir, the inquest on this accident was attended by the factory inspector, and I have received a report with regard to it. It appears that the platform was guarded by a fence one foot nine inches high, but the barrow which the deceased was wheeling came into collision with a stay, and the shock caused him to fall over the fence. Evidence was given by the secretary of the Nottingham Builders' Society to the effect mentioned in the Question before the recent Departmental Committee, and the Committee made a recommendation on the subject. As I stated in the House the other day, legislation will be necessary to carry out the Committee's recommendation, and a Bill is being prepared.

Engagement of Crews—S.Ss. "Cairnrona," "Slingsby," "Maltby," "Broadgarth" and "Stowford."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the engagement of a crew for the steamer "Cairnrona"; if he is aware that eighteen of the crew failed to produce any certificates of discharge with a view of satisfying the Board of Trade officer, who was present when the crew were signed on, that they were competent for the duties for which they were engaged; if he is aware that of the deck hands, numbering eleven, only two were able to prove that they were qualified able seamen; whether he is aware that several of the crew engaged for this vessel gave as their address a Mr. Levy, pawnbroker, of South Shields; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to whether Levy is licensed to keep boarders, and under what circumstances has this man Levy been able to supply men for the "Stowford" and "Cairnrona."

I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the steamers "Slingsby" and "Maltby" engaged crews during the week ending 30th May; whether he can state if the deck hands of these two ships were able to prove that they were qualified able seamen; whether he can state if any of the men belonging to those vessels gave their address as that of J. Levy, East Holborn, South Shields; and if he will have inquiries made as to why crews have been signed on board instead of at the Mercantile Marine Office.

I beg further to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that one of the deck hands of the steamer "Broadgarth" is a Spaniard and cannot speak or understand English; if he can state at what port this man was permitted to engage on this vessel, and if he will cause inquiries to be made at the ports of Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Hamburg, as to whether the language test is being properly applied; and whether he will issue instructions to the deputy superintendents, who are employed engaging crews on board ships at ports in the United Kingdom, to be careful to see that the language test is properly applied and that the seamen engaged are able to produce satisfactory evidence that they are qualified sailors or firemen.

Finally I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the steamer "Stowford" engaged a crew on the 23rd May last at the port of South Shields; if he is aware that five men supplied to this vessel alleged that they were staying with a person named Levy, of East Holborn, South Shields; whether he is aware that the man Levy is a pawnbroker and not licensed to keep boarders; if he is aware that none of the deck hands were able to prove that they were qualified able seamen; if he is aware that this crew was signed on board of the ship; what steps, if any, were taken by the deputy superintendent, who witnessed the engagement of the crew, to inquire as to whether the men had been legally supplied; and whether any steps will be taken in the near future to prevent crews being engaged under such conditions.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I have at present no information respecting the cases of the "Cairnrona," "Slingsby," "Maltby," "Broadgarth" and "Stowford" referred to in these Questions. I am causing inquiries to be made and their result shall be communicated to my hon. friend as soon as possible.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: But should not the information be in the hands of the Board of Trade officers at South Shields?

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no doubt it is. I am making inquiries.

Dredging of the Humber.

SIR GEORGE DOUGHTY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the contractors to the Humber Conservancy Board for removing the Hebbles Shoal, opposite the city of Hull, have commenced the dredging works without giving any notice to the proprietary frontage owners on the River Humber; whether he has given his consent in writing, as required by the Humber Conservancy Act, 1905; whether he is aware that the dredging deposits are estimated at 6,000,000 tons and that the contractors are placing these dredgings on the Sketter Sands, in the Middle Humber; whether he is aware that the ports served by the Upper Humber, particularly Goole and New Holland, view with alarm this action, as it certainly will have a tendency to silt up the river and its approaches to them; and whether he will take such steps as are necessary to stop these works until the law has been obeyed, and until the Board of Trade have held an inquiry at which all parties interested may be heard as provided by Section 12 of the above-mentioned Act.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am not aware that the dredging operations referred to have been commenced, nor do I know whether notice has been given to the proprietory frontagers. The consent of the Board of Trade in writing to the dredging operations (as required by Section 12 of the Humber Conservancy Act, 1905), was given on 9th June, 1906, but I am not aware of the estimated amount of material to be dredged. No application has been made to the Board of Trade for their consent to the deposit of the dredged material below high-water mark in the River Humber in accordance with the said section, and I have no information that any such deposit is taking place. With regard to the views held by the ports on the Upper Humber, the Board received representations from the Aire and Calder Navigation about a year ago, deprecating the deposit of materials in the Humber opposite Hull, and stating that with the view of determining the causes of the present deterioration of the channels above Hull they proposed to submit the question to competent engineers, who after careful investigation would report upon the subject. I am communicating with the Conservancy Board generally on the subject.

French Duties on Sewing Machine Products.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade a Question of which I have given him private notice, viz., if he can say whether a French Customs Commission is considering changes in the French duties on sewing machine products; whether the raising of these duties has been under discussion, and whether, in view of the growing importance of this manufacture in this country, he will consider what steps should be taken in the matter.

MR. CHURCHILL: The Board of Trade have received no information with regard to any contemplated change in the duties at present imposed on sewing machines on importation into France. I will, however, have inquiry made as to the facts.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): What means has the right hon. Gentleman of bringing pressure to bear on the French Government not to raise these duties?

MR. CHURCHILL: We have resources of various kinds.

MR. JAMES HOPE: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what those resources are?

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not think it would be wise to define what resources we may have.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Will the right hon. Gentleman use those resources?

[No Answer was returned.]

Corporal Punishment at Eye Workhouse.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been drawn to the fact that one of the guardians of the Eye Workhouse paid a visit to the Willow House Home and asked to see a little boy by the name of Francis Chambers, aged ten years, who had been so severely beaten as to draw blood, and to the fact that the boy having been brought before the Board it was proved that he had been beaten by the workhouse master; and if he intends to take any action against the workhouse master.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): At the same time may I ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the ill-treatment of children by the master of the Eye, Suffolk, Workhouse, and also to the charges of cruelty and neglect of duty brought against a nurse under the same Board; and will he cause an inquiry to be made into the cases.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): My attention has been called to the matters referred to in these Questions, and I have been in communication with the guardians with respect to them. They have been investigated by a committee appointed by the guardians, who have adopted their report. I have also received a report from the inspector of the district on the subject. The committee found that the charges against the nurse were not in any way substantiated. As regards the boy Chambers, they pointed out that though his punishment by the master was severe, his offence, viz., that of stealing, was a grave one. The committee recommend that in future corporal punishment should not be administered until the day following the notification to the master of the commission of the offence. I am addressing a communication to the guardians on the subject of corporal punishment, but I do not think any further inquiry is necessary.

Milk Bill.

MR. SNOWDEN: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is yet in a position to say when he hopes to introduce the promised Bill for the better regulation of the milk supply.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I cannot at present fix a date for this purpose.

School Children's Physique.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if his attention has been directed to the fact that the German burgomasters who recently visited London on the invitation of the British Municipal Society, when taken to the Hugh Myddleton Higher Elementary School of the London County Council at Clerkenwell, were struck with the poor physical condition of the children there, especially of the girls, and spoke of them with pity and regret; and whether, by making compulsory the Necessitous School Children Act, by increased attention to and expenditure on physical training, or otherwise, he can assure the House of his intention to remove such a stigma from the schools of this country.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. MCKINNON WOOD, Glasgow, St. Rollox): I am not aware of the incident to which my hon. friend refers; but I think it is a matter of common knowledge that the physique of a considerable portion of our elementary school children leaves much to be desired. That Parliament and the Government are fully aware of the need for improvement in this direction is shown, I think, by the passing into law during the last two years of the Act providing for the medical inspection of school children and the Provision of Meals Act. If it is to the last-mentioned Act that my hon. friend is referring, I fear the extent of the Government programme precludes the consideration of any Amendment at the present time. The duty of carrying out the medical inspection of children in public elementary schools was imposed on local education authorities from January 1st last, and when it is in full operation, considerable improvement may reasonably be anticipated.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House whether, in view, of the attitude which the London County Council has taken up, any communication has passed between the Council and the Board of Education on the subject?

Mr. McKINNON WOOD: I am not able to answer that Question without notice. I am not aware of any communication having passed.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY: Can my hon. friend see his way to issue a fresh Circular on the subject, in view of its vital importance?

Mr. McKINNON WOOD: I do not see how that would help, since the matter is left to the discretion of the local authorities.

Afforestation.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, what land has been acquired in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, respectively for the purpose of afforestation since 1st January, 1906.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol E.): Since 1st January, 1906, 12,530 acres of land in Soctland have been acquired by the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for the purpose of afforestation and about 120 acres in England. There have been no such purchases of land in Wales or Ireland.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Is it intended that any land shall be acquired in Wales for the purposes of afforestation?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I must ask for notice of that Question.

Canada and the Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether Canada is at the present time certified as being free from foot-and-mouth disease; if so, how long has it been free from that disease; and will he say for how many months in the last ten years has foot-and-mouth disease been authoritatively asserted to be present among the cattle of that country.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somerset, S.): So far as the Board are aware there has not been any outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Canada during the last ten years.

Home Meat Supplies.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that the number of home-supplied cattle entering the scheduled markets in England is steadily declining year by year; that the number of cattle imported from Ireland is also steadily declining; and if, in view of these facts, he will introduce legislation dealing with the importation of Canadian cattle, seeing that their exclusion has not effected the object in view.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The numbers of cattle returned as entering the scheduled markets and as imported from Ireland were greater in 1907 than in 1906, and the steady decline to which my hon. friend refers is not therefore apparent. I may point out that Canadian cattle are not at present excluded, the number landed for slaughter last year being 125,753. The Board do not propose to introduce legislation of the nature suggested.

Waitresses on the Terrace.

Mr. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the Chairman of the Kitchen Committee if his Committee will consider the advisability of continuing, as in previous years, the practice of engaging waitresses to attend upon visitors to the Terrace during the summer months.

Sir JAMES JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid.): The Kitchen Committee have arranged to engage waitresses for the service on the Terrace. They will be in attendance from Monday, 15th June.

Mr. BOWERMAN: May I ask whether in regard to the delay that has taken place in engaging these ladies, Sir James Jacoby or his colleagues have been influenced by the agitation going on outside the House?

Sir JAMES JACOBY: No, Sir; it has been a question of weather.

Scotland and the Milk Bill.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can yet say whether the Bill dealing with milk, which is to be introduced for England and Wales by the Government, will apply to Scotland.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): The Answer is in the negative. I may add that legislation for Scotland, which in this matter, as my hon. friend is aware, is under separate administration, is under consideration.

Inebriates Acts in Scotland.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if it is his intention to appoint a Scottish Commission to inquire into the working in Scotland of the Inebriates Acts; and, if so, when he will make the appointments.

Mr. SINCLAIR: This matter is engaging my close attention, and I hope to be in a position to make an announcement at an early date.

Scottish Fishery Cruiser.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the headquarters of the fishery cruiser "Ringdove" has been changed; whether the "Ringdove" was anchored at Fortrose from 11th to 18th May; whether, on 19th May, the "Ringdove" took a short trip in the Moray Firth, and then returned and again anchored; and whether he will see that more active steps are taken to stop illegal trawling.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The official headquarters in Scotland of the "Ringdove" is Invergordon. The "Ringdove" was anchored at Fortrose from 12th to 19th May for purposes of repairs. It is the fact that the "Ringdove" proceeded to sea on the 20th. Every effort will be made to take steps to prevent illegal trawling.

Mr. WATT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that whenever witnesses from any of these cruisers are required to attend a Court the vessel is laid up during the time they are away?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I know that that occurs sometimes.

Scottish Magistracy.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate by whom the Justices of the Peace in Scotland are nominated and appointed; and by what process and under what authority, statutory or otherwise, these appointments are made.

The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. Shaw, Hawick Burghs): The appointment of Justices is by Commission direct from the Sovereign. In practice the recommendation for these appointments proceeds from the lord-lieutenant of the county. The statutory authority is by a series of Acts of Parliament, beginning in the year 1582 and extending into the middle of the seventeenth century. My hon. friend will find the history narrated with some fulness in the late Sheriff Barclay's work. There is a variety of *ex officio* appointments under the Local Government Acts, etc. There is no property qualification required in Scotland, but the main and ordinary qualification, which I trust is still answered to by all the Scottish Justices is that of the Act of 1609, viz., that they be "godlie, wyse and vertuous gentlemen."

Mr. WATT: And how many of these "godlie," etc., men, belong to the Liberal Party?

[No Answer was returned].

Tyrone Clerk of the Peace.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state why the provisions of the statute prescribing that on a vacancy in the office of a clerk of the peace or of a clerk of the Crown, the survivor shall be appointed to the joint office of clerk of the Crown and peace were not complied with in the case of County Tyrone; what fault was found with the gentleman up till recently clerk of the Crown for that county; and what better qualifications for the office are possessed by the solicitor recently appointed in his place.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The provisions of the statute were complied with in this case. Under Section 8 of the County Officers and Courts (Ireland) Act, 1877, a temporary clerk of the Crown or temporary clerk of the peace ceases to hold office upon the death of the clerk of the peace or clerk of the Crown as the case may be; and the Lord-Lieutenant is thereupon empowered to appoint a fit and proper person to the united office of clerk of the Crown and peace. The gentleman who till recently was temporary clerk of the Crown accepted that office in 1900 upon the distinct understanding that it gave him no claim to the united office of clerk of the Crown and peace. Upon the recent death of the clerk of the peace the Lord-Lieutenant ordered the offices to be united, and selected for the appointment the person who, in his opinion, was best qualified for the united office.

Roman Catholic Colleges in Ireland.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many Roman Catholic diocesan colleges, besides Maynooth, there are in Ireland; and the total number of persons admitted to the Roman Catholic priesthood from these diocesan colleges and Maynooth during 1907.

MR. CHERRY: My right hon. friend has no official information upon the subject of the Question.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman try and get the information for the assistance of the Committee upstairs?

MR. CHERRY: I think the information is available in the Catholic Directory.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I thought the right hon. Gentleman said he had none?

MR. CHERRY: I said no "official" information.

King's County Police Charge.

MR. HAVILAND BURKE (King's County Tullamore): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that an extra police charge amounting to more than £644 has been levied on the King's County for the year ending 31st March 1908; whether he is aware that the Inspector General of Constabulary has failed to reply to a request made by the King's County County Council to the effect that he should state for what reasons and upon whose recommendation or authority the extra police were drafted into the county and upon what principle he acted in fixing the districts upon which the charge should be assessed or what reason he had for believing that the ordinary strength of the police force in the King's County would not be adequate to cope with any exceptional circumstances alleged to have arisen during the period in question; and whether, in view of the fact that the extra police were drafted into the county before it had been proclaimed under 6 and 7 Will. IV., he will state under what statute the Inspector-General of Constabulary was empowered to assess this extra police charge upon the King's County or upon any district thereof.

MR. CHERRY: The amount of the claims made against the council of King's County in respect of extra police for the year ending 31st March 1908 is £645. In March 1908, the council addressed a number of questions to the Inspector-General on the subject of the account for the half-year ending 30th September, 1907, but, the certificate specified in Section 8 of 11 and 12 Vict., cap. 72, having already been issued, the time allowed by Section 3 of 14 and 15 Vict., cap. 85, for questioning the accuracy of the claim has passed, and the Inspector-General so informed the county council. There has as yet been no correspondence with the council on the subject of the claim for the half-year ending 31st March, 1908. The charges for the extra force which served in King's County before the date of the proclamation are made under 9 and 10 Vict., cap. 97, Section 5, and 11 and 12 Vict., cap. 72, Section 6.

Irish University Commissioners.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if any, and, if any, how many, Commissioners have been selected by the Crown to carry out the provisions of the Irish Universities Bill, and their names.

Mr. CHERRY: My right hon friend has asked me to read his Answer, which is as follows:—It is proposed that all the Commissioners, both for Belfast and Dublin, should be nominated in the Act. The following gentlemen will, I hope, consent to act on the Belfast Commission: The President of Queen's College, Belfast, His Honour Judge Shaw, Professor Symington, Professor Dill; in addition, I hope to secure the consent of two gentlemen of great academic authority, experienced in University matters in Great Britain, and possibly a seventh person will be nominated. The following gentlemen will, I hope, serve on the other Commission: The Presidents of the three colleges, the Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, the Lord Chief Baron, Sir John Rhys, Dr. Henry Jackson, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Cambridge, and the hon. Member for Galway. The hon. Member for Cambridge University, whose assistance I had hoped to secure, is to my great regret, unable to undertake the duties. One or more Members will probably be added.

Congestion in Ireland.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the complicated and contradictory nature of the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland, he intends proceeding with legislation dealing with land in Ireland this session; and, if so, can he state whether before or after the autumn recess.

Mr. CHERRY: My right hon. friend is very sensible of the difficulties of this matter, but he intends during the autumn sitting to bring in a Bill on the subject of congestion in Ireland.

Irish Heraldic Offices.

Mr. BYLES: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how long have the offices of Dublin herald and Athlone pursuivant been vacant; is it proposed to make new appointments; and what, if any, are the duties, and what the salaries, attached to these offices.

Mr. CHERRY: The offices have been vacant since November last. It is proposed to make new appointments. The office of Athlone pursuivant is a heraldic office, and also an office of the Order of St. Patrick. Dublin herald is an officer of the Order of St. Patrick. Both of these officers assist in the business of Office of Arms, and discharge ceremonial duties in connection with the Order of St. Patrick when an investiture takes place. Athlone receives the sum of £20 per annum out of a Parliamentary Vote, but the office of Dublin herald is unpaid.

Mr. BYLES: Do I understand that both these offices are practically sinecures?

Mr. CHERRY: Yes. As I have said, the one gets £20 a year and the other gets nothing.

Mr. BYLES: Is it possible to save the expenses of them and add them to the old-age pension fund on the principle of the ointment that was sold and the money distributed to the poor?

[No Answer was returned.]

Irish Lights—Ballyquinton Point.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state what further steps have been taken by the Irish Lights Commissioners to place a light on Ballyquinton Point, County Down; and whether it is hoped to complete the erection before the rough weather of winter sets in this year.

Mr. CHURCHILL: As my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer informed the hon. Member for North Down on 20th February last, the Commisioners of Irish Lights do not propose to erect a lighthouse on Ballyquinton Point. The Commissioners now propose, with the concurrence of the Trinity House, to improve the lighting of the entrance to Strangford Lough by establishing a lighted whistling buoy there. The Board of Trade have invited the observations of the Advisory Committee on New Lighthouse Works upon the proposal, and hope to be in a position to give their decision very shortly.

Captain CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his predecessor in office last year promised that this question should have immediate attention, and in view of the serious number of wrecks that occur on this coast will he get the whistling buoy fixed before the winter weather sets in ?

Mr. CHURCHILL : I will give the matter prompt attention.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry) : Has the right hon. Gentleman's Department absolutely no control over the Irish Lights Commissioners who are not responsible to anyone in this House ?

Mr. CHURCHILL : I believe that is so.

Kingstown Harbour Dispute.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury why did the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury and the Postmaster-General take the responsibility of overruling the Report of Captain Meldrum, the Postmaster-General's own nautical adviser.

Mr. HOBHOUSE : If the hon. Member refers to the question of the admission of the vessels of the London and North-Western Railway Company to Kingstown Harbour, I have to say that the decision of the Harbour Commissioners was taken after consulting competent expert advisers.

Mr. MOONEY : That is not an Answer to the Question. Was the decision contrary to the advice contained in Captain Meldrum's Report ?

Mr. HOBHOUSE : I cannot say. The Commissioners are responsible for the decision at which they arrived.

Mr. MOONEY : I will repeat the Question.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND : I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if any arrangements, written or verbal, have been arrived at between the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, the Commissioners of Public Works, and Kingstown Harbour, or any Government Department, and the London and North-Western Railway Company, as to the charge to be made on that Company's vessels for entering Kingstown Harbour and using Carlisle Pier.

Mr. HOBHOUSE : The question of the dues to be charged for the use of Kingstown Harbour by the London and North-Western Railway Company is under consideration.

Mr. MOONEY : Is the hon. Gentleman aware that his predecessor on 16th March said a decision had been come to ?

Mr. HOBHOUSE : I do not know what my predecessor said. I can only say the matter is under consideration and I hope a decision will be arrived at soon. Since the date mentioned by the hon. Gentleman a considerably momentous decision has been arrived at.

Mr. MOONEY : What decision ?

Mr. HOBHOUSE : The decision in the Law Courts.

Mr. MOONEY : That has nothing to do with the question of charges.

Poaching by Fleetwood Trawlers.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL : I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he is aware that about a dozen steam trawlers from Fleetwood are continually poaching the enclosed fisheries at Tory Island, Donegal Bay, Clew Bay, and in other places, such as Rathlin O'Bierne and Sheep-Haven, near Hornhead, not venturing on this poaching by daytime, but at night with their lights put out as a safeguard against detection ; and, having regard to the effect of this poaching in the deprivation of the inhabitants of these districts of their means of livelihood, which largely depend on the fishing industry, what steps, if any, will be taken for the prevention of this poaching and the punishment of the persons engaged in it.

Mr. CHERRY : The Department endeavour with the means at their disposal to enforce their bye-laws which prohibit steam trawling. The areas mentioned in the Question have been patrolled by their vessels on several occasions during the last month, but no illegal fishing was observed. Save from Tory Island, the Department have not recently received reports of the illegal trawling referred to. In some of the vicinities mentioned in the Question steam trawling can be legally carried on. The Department will not lose sight of the necessity of watching, both by day and night, those waters in which steam trawling is prohibited.

SUPPLY [9TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair].

Civil Services and Revenue Departments Estimates, 1908–9.

CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £40,830, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs."

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.), who had given notice of his intention to move to reduce the Vote by £100, said he presumed the Foreign Secretary had, during the last few days, received sufficient indication of the strong feeling existing in the country in relation to the State visit which our own King was about to pay the Czar of Russia. That feeling was strong, not only among the working classes, but also among very many of the middle classes. This question was a very difficult and delicate one to handle, and whatever strong criticisms the Labour Party might have to offer—and in this matter he spoke for his colleagues—with respect to the Government making arrangements for the visit at this particular moment, they wanted in no sense to say anything that would reflect upon the honour of His Majesty the King. No one could object to an ordinary English gentleman visiting his relatives. It was only when they heard that this visit was to be of a representative character that they raised their protest. He desired to say that Gentlemen on his side of the House had nothing but the highest admiration for the splendid and noble work which His Majesty had done in the cause of the amity of nations and of international peace. Having said that, he wanted to refer no more to the King himself. The right of the Labour Members to raise this subject had been questioned; but the Labour movement was the only movement of a political character which was also of an international character, and that movement had entered into contracts and agreements with neighbours on the Continent and elsewhere, and had done much to assure even the peace of Europe. The international character of the movement gave him and his colleagues a right to intervene and to raise a strong protest against the projected visit. There were other reasons why the Foreign Office, even at this late hour, should take action that would at least remove the responsibility for the visit from the shoulders of the people of this country and allocate the blame, because blame must be allocated, to the proper quarters. This country loved free institutions, the right of free speech and a free Press, but those things could not be said to exist in Russia. Whatever might have been the reasons which had caused foreign nations to enter into agreements with Russia, at least we should have our eyes open to the fact that if we mixed in evil company the result was bound to be that we should be to a certain extent contaminated. In other words, speaking for the democracy of this country, he feared that the result of this relationship with a country like Russia, with all the horrors, tortures, and persecustion that were going on there at present, might be that the same might be applied in this country. They could not be mixed up in these matters without responsibility, in some sense, devolving on them, and also danger to the people of this country. It would be interesting to know in what circumstances the projected visit was arranged, and when the arrangement was made. They remembered the splendid speech made by the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that startled Europe at the time of the Peace Conference. In his (Mr. O'Grady's) judgment, Sir Henry did something on that occasion to modify the action of the Russian authorities in regard to the Duma. The reply which he received to a Question last Tuesday indicated that the hands of His Majesty's Government were being forced by the Russian Government. It might be that a State visit by His Majesty to the Czar of Russia might have the result of rehabilitating the financial credit of Russia, and when they came to remember the experiences of the last five years in Russia, they could only come to the conclusion that at least a portion of the loan floated some time ago had been used to continue the iron grip upon the common people of Russia, and send the best men and women of that country to be tortured, imprisoned, or exiled. There were grave reasons why they should attempt to alter this projected visit. They had in their minds the well-known incidents of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg. It was said that the Czar was not responsible for that. But Father Gregory Petroff, who happened to be in the palace at the time the massacre took place, had declared that when the news of what had taken place reached the palace, instead of there being consternation among the members of the Imperial family, there was nothing but pleasantries going on and laudation of the brave little soldiers who had shot down the people. How could the Sovereign of this country, with a great human heart, be asked to consort with the head of a State like that? He would continue the story. Who were the people who were shot down? The members of his (Mr. O'Grady's) own class who were on strike, not for industrial conditions, but for the freedom of their social life, and they marched in procession with a priest at their head, carrying a crucifix. Had the Little Father appeared on the steps and received the petition of the people, the people would have fallen down and worshipped him. As a result of the massacre, there was a general strike throughout the whole of Russia, and the throne of the Czar began to totter. Seeing the danger to his own household and to his own reign, the Czar issued his famous manifesto, declaring it to be his immutable will that there should be a representative Parliament, and completely guaranteeing the sanctity of life and domicile, and granting a free Press, free speech, and above all, the right of workmen to combine. That was upon 30th October, 1905. The people in their simplicity came out into the streets to demonstrate their joy at the concessions which had been granted them. In 160 towns and villages of Russia on 31st October in that year, there was rapine, murder, and pillage, and about 15,000 men, women, and children were killed and wounded. It might be said that that was an attack upon the Jews; but it was not so absolutely. When the first Duma was established the Liberals gave expression to their political convictions, and because they did what hon. Gentlemen opposite were doing frequently in this country, 167 of the first Duma were arrested and either sent to prison for three or four years or exiled from their country. Here they had the spectacle of the Liberal Government, arranging a State visit to a Government, not a country, the head of which had arrested the Liberal Members of his own Duma and imprisoned or exiled them. During the seven months which elapsed between the dissolution of the first Duma and the establishment of the second, attacks were continued upon inoffensive people in all parts of Russia. The Government of the Czar decreed that 1,200 people should be executed for simply expressing Liberal political convictions. The men who committed the massacres were publicly thanked and rewarded by the Czar himself. The Czar accepted the badge of the Black Hundred and pinned it upon his own breast, and, worse still, he pinned it upon the breast of his own innocent child. His information might be wrong, but he asserted it on the highest authority that the torture chambers were manned by soldiers and police, and special instruments were manufactured in order to torture innocent people. It was not a question of Nihilists at all. Anyone who expressed mere Liberal political opinions was held as a revolutionary. At Riga the unnameable torture that took place in prison was such as to cause men awaiting it to set fire to themselves. He ventured to think that the King himself was probably taking note of the protest that was being made in that House and that he must desire that at least some alteration should take place with regard to the contemplated visit. So far as he could gather, the Government and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs were behind this visit and were determined to see it through. They were prepared to take all risks. It was very difficult to move a Government from a position they had once taken up, and he should follow the reply of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with great interest. Another important reason against the visit was that the number of executions in recent times had gone up from 200 to 250 a month. The Press was dead, and with the exception of one or two very moderate papers which backed up the Government, was not allowed to circulate. Having now stated his case and lodged his protest against this projected visit and given his reasons why it should either be cancelled or its character altered, he appealed to every section of the House to support him in the division lobby. To hon. Members opposite he said, despite strict party ties, it was their duty to come into the lobby with him and support the men and women in Russia who to-day held the same convictions as themselves. To Members above the gangway he would appeal not to forget their own countrymen, men of their own nationality, and the disgrace and the shame that had gone on in respect to the persecution of the Jews in Russia. To all he appealed on the higher grounds of justice and common humanity. In conclusion he would say that if this business was allowed to go on in its representative character it would be a shame and a disgrace to our nation, and history and posterity would write it down as such. He hoped after this protest hon. Members would support the Motion. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"That the sum proposed to be granted be reduced by £100."

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item A (Salaries, Wages and Allowances) be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. O'Grady.*)

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) said that no one could feel otherwise than deeply touched by the noble and inspiring appeal that had been made by his hon. friend. In the many Houses of Parliament of which he had been a Member, and which all contained some who were sympathetic with the people's liberty, and some who were not, there had never been any time when an elevating expression of humanity had not found its echo in the great heart of that Assembly. Into the internal affairs of Russia and the horrors now being allowed to take place, which as an historian reminded him of the horrors perpetrated in Ireland in ancient days, he would not enter. But he thought that this was a time in which, with great respect, two matters of vital interest in constitutional practice involved in this question and this Vote should be brought forward. While acknowledging the truth of the great maxim that the King could do no wrong, he at the same time said, as everybody indeed knew, that the Foreign Minister was responsible for his acts. Therefore, he said, there were two points in the political conduct of the Foreign Secretary which were deeply to be deprecated. The first was that, by a new and very improper rupture of old-established constitutional practice, the King was going abroad without a Minister responsible to the people. That perhaps was not a very great point, but the second was a very large one. Not only was the King, he who was the outward and visible sign of the majesty of Great Britain, going without the Minister responsible both to him and to this House, but he was going upon advice for which the right hon. Gentleman was responsible. The King was going to visit a foreign Power, the head of which would have his own Prime Minister and other officers of State with him. If this was a private visit that would not much matter, but it was a public and diplomatic visit, and the King, instead of being accompanied by his high officers of State, was to be accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, an eminent diplomat and permanent head of the Foreign Office, and by the two great permanent heads of the Navy and War Departments. Everyone knew the great atmosphere of intrigue that hovered round St. Petersburg of secret treaties here and negotiations there. Did the Secretary of State think it proper or consistent with his position as the servant of the King and of that House to send permanent officials when he was not going himself, and was it right to put the

King into a position that his responsible Minister did not dare to face? No constitutional lawyer would deny that when a Sovereign went abroad he was supposed by going abroad to be divested of his capacity for doing Royal work and carry on Royal business. The old law was to vest the Government of the country in Lords Justices, and when that fell into abeyance a Regency was appointed. Never in the olden times did a Sovereign leave this country for however short a time unless somebody was appointed to carry on the government in his absence. George III. never went abroad at all. Seventeen kings in succession never went abroad during their reigns. This House was exceedingly jealous of the Sovereign going abroad, and the Act under which the Sovereign occupied the throne contained a provision that he was not to go abroad without the assent of both Houses of Parliament. Up to the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria the rule was that Lords Justices or a Regency should be appointed. The Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland could not leave the country without appointing three Lords Justices of Ireland to carry on the government. Her Majesty Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, and the first time she went abroad, in 1842, the question was raised as to whether there should be a Regency. It was thought by two Lords Justices to be unnecessary, but Lord Campbell thought otherwise; and on the second occasion when the Queen visited Germany he asked in the House of Lords why a Regency was not established or Lords Justices appointed, and then he used these remarkable words—

> "I should not like to see the Royal authority in abeyance for any reason, and it seems to me to be inconsistent with that principle that the country should be left for any period without the privilege of being able to exercise the Royal prerogative."

Lord Lyndhurst thought that the proper and safe course was that the Queen when she went abroad should be accompanied by her own Secretary of State, who would be aware of everything that went on, and responsible for every word and action. Let them see how far that principle went, and how jealously the House of Commons guarded it. In 1876, when Mr. Disraeli was Prime Minister, a Question was asked in the House of Commons when the Queen went to Germany. The Question was put on the 28th March, 1876, and another was asked on the 30th March of that year. On both occasions Mr. Disraeli made the same reply, and he relied on the fact of the Queen herself being accompanied by a Cabinet Minister, and, therefore, being placed in close contact with the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli in his replies said that every arrangement had been made to avoid inconvenience to the business of the nation through the absence of the Sovereign, and the Secretary of State was in attendance. Her Majesty had been only twice absent from her dominions during the session of Parliament in forty years. No interference with public business had ever been occasioned during her absence. On the 8th of April, if the Secretary of State had been at Biarritz, he could have kept in close connection with the House and the whole of its affairs, and public business would not have been obstructed for a fortnight, and every Department of the country dislocated, because the Minister had to go abroad to form a Government. He was not an Englishman, but he would consider it rather humiliating to have to go abroad because the King of England, who acted on the advice of his Ministers, was not here at the head of affairs. This matter was so clear that it was scarcely arguable the other way. The Sovereign who went abroad by the very necessities of his position was brought into contact with those who might misunderstand every word that was said, because they did not know the English constitution as we did. Although the visits of the late Queen abroad were of a semi-private character and although she travelled *incognita* under the title of the Countess of Balmoral, she was accompanied as a matter of course by her Minister. Even when she went to some of her usual residences, such as Osborne, she was attended by her Minister. During the last visit which she paid to Ireland, although the Lord-Lieutenant was a Cabinet Minister, it was considered that she should have for English affairs a responsible Minister who was in communication with the central authorities. The then Home Secretary, Sir Matthew White Ridley, attended her on her visit to Ireland in 1900, in order to place the Sovereign, as head of the Executive, in close communication with Ministers. They now came to a very serious matter. This visit by the King was announced with pomp and circumstances, literally with a flourish of trumpets. The Monarch who stood at the head of the Empire's affairs in its relation to the foreign affairs of the Empire, who could proclaim war, make peace, or enter into any treaty he liked, was going to a country notoriously in a distressed condition, a country full of political tragedies, a country whose very name was suggestive of intrigue. Let the House look at any paper of the foreign Press, and they would see the significance which was attached to this visit. He did not want to labour this point too much, but the presence of Sir Charles Hardinge gave the visit a diplomatic stamp; the presence of Sir John Fisher gave it an association with our Navy; and the presence of Sir John French gave it a stamp which had reference to the British Army. He hoped the House would bear with him while he referred to what had been said by men of former days, who, the House should remember, had sustained our liberties in troublous periods. If they looked to their statements they would find evidence in the most unlikely sources of the impropriety of the Sovereign's holding communication by himself with foreign potentates. When Napoleon was First Consul he addressed a letter to George III. That Sovereign always acted constitutionally; he never entered into any correspondence with foreign Kings or foreign Ministers without consulting his own Ministers. He gave Napoleon's letter to his Prime Minister who answered it. Then there came a great precedent from a very unlikely man—a man who, so far as popular liberties were concerned, was everything that the present Prime Minister was not, and that was a very strong expression. He referred to Lord Liverpool. In 1815 there was a Treaty being formed which was called the Holy Alliance, and the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia signed it. It was sent to George IV. for him to sign, and what did Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, and the most reactionary of men, say? He said in a letter dated Oct. 3, 1815, that the Treaty was the Act of the State, and if it was to be of any use it was obviously meant to be so. Nothing was more clear than that the King of Great Britain could do no act personally, but only through the instrumentality of others, who were responsible. The Sovereign, therefore, never signed any treaty in the first instance. He concluded it through his plenipotentiaries, and afterwards it must have the Great Seal affixed to it. That showed that the Minister of State was alone responsible. There was another authority, and a very unlikely one from this point of view. He referred to George Canning. Another authority, who could not be suspected of undue deference to constitutional usage, the first Duke of Wellington, in December, 1829, stated in a letter to Lord Aberdeen, who was then Foreign Secretary, that it was not usual for the King of England to receive from other Sovereigns letters which had not passed through the hands of his Ministers. Indeed, the Duke wrote, he had known instances of letters having been returned, because copies had not been sent with the sealed letters for the information of the Minister. It was unusual and improper for the King to answer a letter from another Sovereign without the advice of the Minister who, whether he advised or not, was responsible. These were the statements of Lord Liverpool, Mr. Canning, and the Duke of Wellington, who were most reactionary Ministers. Queen Victoria, who acted on the admirable advice of the Prince Consor, behaved with great constitutional propriety. In 1848 a letter was written by the King of Prussia, to be handed to Her Majesty by the British Ambassador. She immediately sent for Lord Palmerston, who answered it. If they would take the trouble to look at that most interesting volume of the life of the Prince Consort, they would find set forth the letters which were shown by the Queen to her Foreign Ministers or to the Prime Minister. "The King can commit no wrong," but his Ministers were responsible. These visits were wholly a product of the present reign. They were never heard of before. These visits first of all to the King of Italy, then to the King of Portugal, then to the President of the French Republic, and then to Germany, however excellent their motive, were all improper constitutionally. This was a matter in which he felt very strongly, and Englishmen ought to feel more strongly.

SIR IVOR HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.) said that if the question before the Committee had been confided to the constitutional point which had been so ably placed before the House by the hon. Member, it would not have been required that he should reinforce himself with that array of constitutional research with which he knew so well how to convince them. But the question which had been raised by the hon. Member for Leeds went far beyond the point as to whether or not the Sovereign of these realms should be accompanied by one of his responsible Ministers when he went on a journey. The question was clearly put by the hon. Member and he admired the delicacy with which he had introduced this very difficult question. In the opinion of the hon. Member there should be no communication between the Government of this country through its representative the King, and the Sovereign of a friendly Power. As one who had had the somewhat exceptional advantage of a long residence in that country he ventured to intervene in the debate, because it seemed to him that the hon. Member had approached the question, if he might say so without offence, from a somewhat narrow point of view, a purely insular one. It would be necessary in order to form a sound judgment on such a question as this, to have knowledge of the aspirations, the feelings, and above all, the modes of thought of the people of Russia. He had had ample opportunity to obtain such knowledge. He had spent in the country five years which were to him now a happy memory which had been kept fresh and enduring by friendships formed with persons of all conditions of life in that Empire during the time he resided there and association and correspondence which had been constantly maintained through all the varying circumstances of a somewhat mixed career with the people of that country, and by the continued interest which he had felt in the welfare and progress of the people there. He could not help wondering, as he listened to the hon. Member for Leeds, what could be the motive power which had induced him to put forward this opinion in the manner in which he had, that there should be no communication of this kind between this country and official Russia—what was the object at which he aimed, the good that was to be done by putting this forward. He could only come to the conclusion that it was from the abounding sympathies that the hon. Gentleman had, that he was full to overflowing with generous warm-hearted sympathy, and that it had overflowed into this Motion. He shared with the hon. Member these sympathies, but he had taken a very strange way of showing them to the people of Russia. They would look upon it as an assertion that because the hon. Member disapproved of certain relations between the Sovereign of that country and the people over whom he reigned, therefore he considered that this country should boycott the Russian Empire. It was difficult for an Empire like ours, which extended over every part of the World, to ignore the existence—and boycotting meant ignoring the existence—of an Empire of some 9,000,000 square miles and over 150,000,000 inhabitants. The proposition was one of the most astounding examples of sympathy of which he had ever heard. They said that because the Russian people were down-trodden and oppressed, and because they had not attained constitutional happiness such as we enjoyed in this country, we should have nothing to do with them. He could not help thinking that hon. Gentlemen opposite had been carried away by their sympathy, and had not sufficiently considered what were the political forces really at work in the Russian Empire. He disapproved of the discussion of the domestic affairs of another country in that House at all. The struggle going on in Russia was not a struggle between democracy and an autocrat. Anyone who knew Russia, who had had even a shorter experience than he had had of the country, knew that that was not so. If one went about Russia as he had done, and spoke with the peasants in the north of Russia, and those who inhabited the great fertile plains in the south; if one went on the great water ways of the country and on the steppes on the Baltic and spoke to the people, one would find that there was no animosity between the people and their Sovereign. The struggle was between the people and the bureaucracy. What the people writhed under was the power of the bureaucracy, as the carnal embodiment of the Socialist ideas voiced by the Labour Party. Hon. Gentlemen seemed to doubt the statement. Let them take the Statute-book of the Russian Empire and examine the statutes which had been drawn up by well-meaning officials, and they would find many experimental laws which had been based upon theories which hon. Gentlemen opposite were sometimes eloquent in supporting. The hon. Member shook his head, but he could show the hon. Member the statutes to which he referred. In the meantime, he would ask him to accept his evidence, which had the merit that it was the evidence of a man who had been on the spot, and who had devoted a good deal of time to the study of it. It was not a conflict with the Sovereign, but with the system, a system of red tape in an exaggerated form.

Mr. GRAYSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Colne Valley): Might I ask the hon. Gentleman if the officials there are subject to or above the will of the Czar?

Sir IVOR HERBERT: Under the existing conditions every official of the country is constitutionally subject to Parliament, and will be, we all hope, as efficiently under the control of Parliament as the officials here are under the control of this House.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): They will not be much the better for that.

Sir IVOR HERBERT quite agreed that there was room for improvement even here. The struggle going on in Russia was a struggle between democracy and bureaucracy. It would be no consolation to the people who were labouring under this bureaucratic system if we showed them our sympathy by insulting the only man in the country in whom they believed. The masses in Russia did believe in their Emperor, not only as the head of the State, but as the head of the great Christian community to which they belonged, the greatest, next to that of which he was a member, in the whole world. The people of Russia, be it remembered, looked on the Czar, not only with the respect given to the ordinary constitutional Sovereign, but with the reverence belonging to the head of their religion. Was the House going to insult this feeling of the Russian nation? Then there was the position of the British workers in Russia. He supposed the Labour Party would feel some interest in that matter. There were many British workmen and workmen of British origin who still retained their British citizenship in Russia. Wales had provided the most prosperous colony ever set up in a foreign country, a town in the southern district of Russia, where there were great ironworks and collieries, a district somewhat similar to that which he had the honour to represent, and they were well treated and occupied superior positions. Englishmen had invariably been well treated in Russia. The men who went there were not the castaways of labour, but the aristocrats of labour. Let them go into the workshops of Petersburg, Moscow, or the Government workshops of Sevastopol on the Baltic and they would find that the men who were receiving the best pay and holding the most responsible positions came from this country and retained their nationality. Would the situation of these British subjects be improved by the assertion of such views as had been expressed from the opposite benches or by the submission of a motion which was an insult to the country which was giving our workmen hospitality? In every country there was a certain section of the people who looked upon foreigners with suspicion, and it was the case in Russia as elsewhere. In some parts of this country it was said that the proper way to receive a stranger was to heave half a brick at him. Whether that was so or not he did not know, but there were many persons in this country and even in this House who, when ever they saw a foreigner, looked upon him as an undesirable alien. That feeling existed also in Russia. Was it possible, therefore, when such speeches were made in this Parliament, as had been made, with no other object than to insult Russia and the Czar, that the positions of English, Scottish and Welshmen working in Russia would be improved? If hon. Members looked at the Russian Press they would find it had not only a strong constitutional tendency, but a very strong national tendency. He knew the Russian papers well, and it was his pleasure to endeavour to follow in the native Press of Russia the events now taking place. If hon. Gentlemen below the gangway pressed this Motion, he saw no reason why they should stop where they were now. If they were determined to take action against a friendly nation, why should they confine themselves to the very small pin-prick of snubbing, or attempting to snub, a great Sovereign? Why not take more active and more dignified action? He did not believe that hon. Members had really considered, before raising this question, what were the conditions existing in Russia, and what was the feeling of the people of that country. They had been considering the ill-informed opinion which existed in every country, and undoubtedly in this country, upon this particular question. More than anything else hon. Members on the Ministerial benches desired to see a condition of things which would enable a further reduction to be made in the weight of armaments of which they were constantly complaining. It was not by such motions as this that that would be effected.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.) thought the debate turned on the speech of the hon. Member for East Leeds. The constitutional point raised by the hon. Member for Donegal, though of great importance, was a secondary point. The speech of the hon. Member for East Leeds would undoubtedly have the greatest weight in the country. It was eloquent, sincere, and impassioned, and if anything would have converted his vote that speech would have done so. In one passage of peculiar power the hon. Gentleman appealed to the Jewish people, turning, he knew not why, to these benches. He agreed with the hon. Member, and he would watch the division list with interest to see how many of that race had been true to it in the great conflict between itself and the Russian Government. But to those who had not such a special motive, there was another very strong motive, in spite of all that had been said by the hon. Member for East Leeds, for entering the other lobby. He was sure the hon. Member would agree that he was sincere in saying that it was a very difficult thing for anyone who had an ardent, almost a revolutionary, faith in the necessity of democratic changes in all countries, to vote against a Motion of this kind. Those, however, who knew Russia best, were divided in opinion as to whether the extreme revolutionary movement there was national. Granted that it was so, even then there were reasons for making a man with his democratic sympathies enter the lobby against the Member for East Leeds. There were two motives. The first had been touched upon by the hon. and gallant Member for South Monmouthshire. It might be illogical, but action by a foreign official body which prevented the meeting of the heads of two executives was invariably regarded by the nation against whom it was directed as an act of international discourtesy. Even the man who was fighting against the executive of his own country would turn round at once and say that it was an act of international discourtesy to treat his executive in the way suggested. That was historically and contemporaneously true, and the overwhelming mass of Russian national opinion would be shocked if by any action of ours we were to slight their executive. There was a second and more important point. He thought the hon. Member for East Leeds, like very many other Members who were ardent reformers, hardly appreciated, he would not say the perils, but the delicacy of the present moment in our international relations. He would not dwell upon that matter at any length, but he thought that in our present circumstances—he would not use the words "amity" or "furtherance of peace"—anything that helped us towards national security it was the duty of every man who owed allegiance to this country to support.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) said the hon. and gallant Member for South Monmouthshire at the beginning of his interesting speech stated that only those who had knowledge of the national customs and aspirations of Russia should take part in this debate.

SIR IVOR HERBERT: I think the hon. Member must have misunderstood me.

MR. KETTLE said the hon. and gallant Member suggested that his intimate knowledge of the customs of the Russian people gave him a superiority in debate over any Member who might not chance to have that knowledge. Was an average of three executions a day included among the national aspirations of the people of Russia? He did not know anything about the conditions of things in Russia except what he saw in the newspapers. The hon. and gallant Member advanced on his own side a good many assertions for which he did not give any authority, though he questioned the validity of the statements put forward by the hon. Member for East Leeds. He would like to ask the hon. and gallant Member whether all the newspapers, not only of England, but of Europe, had been deceiving us on affairs in Russia? The reports in the French and German papers agreed with what appeared in the English Press. Were the figures given by the hon. Member for East Leeds disputed? They were told that there was a gradual development towards a democratic system in Russia. The development appeared to be extremely gradual. There was more gradation than development. He would not go back to the storm which swept over Russia in 1905 and 1906 from the Baltic provinces to Georgievsk and the Caucasus, but he would remind the House that in the first three months of this year there were 267 executions, being an average of eighty-nine per month, or three per day. Did the hon. Member for South Salford deny the existence of the torture chamber? There were well-authenticated reports of ruined towns, and devastated villages. Were the stories untrue in regard to women dishonoured, schoolboys shot down, and men by administrative orders to the number of 7,000 or 8,000 arrested and imprisoned without trial of any kind within the last three years? Were they told in serious mood that that was all a fancy, a fiction? He should think the majority of hon. Members did not possess direct knowledge, but most of them had had an opportunity of coming into contact with people who had had personal experience of those things. The hon. and gallant Gentleman made one point of appeal to the party to which he himself belonged, the foundation of whose belief was the principle of nationality and an indisposition to interfere with the domestic affairs of other peoples, and he asked what was the motive power, the force, the ideas behind this Amendment? The motive power behind the Amendment was our common humanity. However disguised the meaning of this visit might be, though the Foreign Secretary might dispose of the very important point of constitutional law made with such ability by his hon. friend the Member for South Donegal and wrap it round with any number of smooth phrases, the visit would be taken by Europe as an expression, and was intended as an expression, of sympathy with the bureaucracy of Russia at whose head was the Czar. It meant backing the bills and rehabilitating the credit of the Czar. It meant approval of the programme of assassination, massacre, exile, and destruction of property which, whatever might be said of his personal character and personal responsibility, bore the official signature of the Czar. Was that to be countersigned by the Sovereign Monarch of this country, acting in the name of this country? This was not fraternisation with Russia, nor could the abandonment or postponement of the visit be construed into an insult to Russia, or to the people of Russia. Surely the ordinary relations had been and could be maintained; there would be no interruption of the importation of Russian wheat and butter, and all that kind of intercourse between the people of this country and the people of Russia. This visit was not a fraternisation with the people of Russia, but a fraternisation with the hangman of liberty in Russia. The hon. Gentleman opposite had spoken with eloquence of the very different message of encouragement from English Liberalism sent to Russia through the late Prime Minister when he said "The Duma is dead; long live the Duma." That message rang through Europe and brought hope to the heart of the Russian people. Very different was the message now. It was "Liberty is dead; long live the Czar." He had to say in conclusion that the party on those benches thoughout its history had continuously separated itself from a foreign policy of aggression. Whatever Government was in power they had steadily resisted the spirit of jingoism, and had steadily protested against the foreign policy of this country which followed jingoism. Here to-day they were glad to have the opportunity of joining hands with the Labour Party in a protest against the official visit of His Majesty to the Czar. His hon. friend who moved the Amendment said that the cause of labour was international. Another thing was international, and that was justice and conscience, and it was in the name of common humanity and a sense of justice that they joined in the protest against this visit, and when the vote was taken the Irish Members would not separate themselves from the Labour Party.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) said that this Motion had put many on his side of the House in a very difficult position, as they were very unwilling to do anything which would seem to be ungracious when they realised what good had been done to the amity of nations by visits made to different States by our Sovereign. This was, however, one of those cases in which conduct had to be guided by principles higher than those which ordinarily moved Members of the House. The hon. and gallant Member for Monmouthshire had made a speech impressive in tone and information, but he thought that the hon. and gallant Gentleman had failed in some degree to state the real root and crucial issue before the House when he said that if this visit were not paid it would be an insult to the people of Russia. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had referred to some settlers in Russia from his own part of the country, and said that if this vote were carried it would make the condition of those people in Russia more uncomfortable than it was at present. He himself represented a constituency that had sent more industrial settlers to Russia than any other constituency in England. He had visited these people in Russia and had made himself acquainted with the conditions in which they lived and of the state of the people around them; and he said deliberately that the reverse of what had been stated by the hon. and gallant Gentleman was true. He maintained that the people by whom those British settlers were surrounded, and on whom the comfort of their lives was largely dependent, were in sympathy almost universally with the struggles of the people of Russia for greater freedom, and that therefore they would regard a visit of this kind as a discouragement. The hon and gallant Gentleman asked if they wished to boycott or to insult any nation. He thought that was an examiner's way of putting a case. There were times when one declined to dine with a man, but one did not therefore boycott him. One said that there were conditions in that man's private life which made it undignified for one to dine with him, or even shake hands with him, but it did not follow that one insulted him thereby. It was said that this visit of the King to the Czar was a return visit for that which the Czar made to Her Majesty after his coronation; but under the circumstances, and considering what had been going on during the three years interval, they thought that this was an inadvisable time for the return visit, and that it could be postponed without any question whatever of boycott or insult. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary would remember that some time ago a visit was proposed of the British Fleet to the Russian Fleet at Kronstadt. He took the liberty of interviewing then the Foreign Secretary, and told him that if that visit were insisted upon, he and his friends would use all the forms of the House to protest against it. Now the position was exactly what it was then. He spoke with some little knowledge of Russia—not at all comparable with that of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, but sufficient to make him fairly acquainted with the conditions of affairs on this particular matter, which alone concerned them now. This visit, of course, could not be regarded as a visit of a private nature. The hon. Member for Leeds said that they should all sympathise with the position of Monarchs which, when not ridiculous, was generally tragic, and that any alleviation of their loneliness, any mitigation of the preposterous isolation in which they lived, ought to have their sympathy, and particularly in the case of a Sovereign who was connected with our own Royal House by double ties of relationship. Not one word of criticism would go out against such a visit if it were private. He could never forget the emotion with which he had watched the lonely Czar, surrounded by troops with clanking swords, passing along the streets of his capital amid the dead silence of his people. Never had he seen a more mournful, a more tragic figure. Therefore, if it were only a visit from one Monarch and relative to another, their hearts would have gone out with the fullest sympathy with it. But there was someone else they had to think of besides the Czar; they had to have sympathy with someone else besides Monarchs—those dumb suffering millions who were making a struggle for freedom. Let the House remember that at this particular moment that struggle was in a critical, dangerous phase. It was said that they had arrived at a normal condition of government in Russia, and his hon. and gallant friend had spoken as if this was a struggle, not between a nation and a Monarch, but a struggle between democracy and bureaucracy. Yes, but who was with the bureaucracy? It was the Monarch who had attained his state and power by identifying his fate with that of the bureaucracy of which he was the head, and therefore he must take the consequences and responsibilities of that alliance. They had been told that in a struggle like this they must not interfere with the internal affairs of another country. That had never been the principle of English statesmanship. What would Mr. Gladstone have thought of a visit of the British Monarch to the King of Naples when the struggle for Italian freedom was in progress? Would this country view with favour an official State visit from our King just now to the Sultan of Turkey? In days gone by, not so very long ago, in cases of this kind, Englishmen, ancestors of his own, had taken an active part and fought in the struggles of other nations for freedom. Lord Byron and others had done it for Greece, and thousands of Englishmen had fought in the war for Italian freedom. Now they were not allowed to do that. Russia was a country so unwieldly, so incoherent, so vast, so helpless, that when a struggle of this kind was going on it was impossible for Englishmen to shoulder their guns and go into the fight side by side with those who were struggling to be free. If we could not do that, were we to do nothing? It might be said that the internal affairs of Russia were no concern of ours, but they were. We could now only mark our opinion of the conduct of a vile citizen by refusing to associate with him, and we could say to Russia, or to any other country where a life and death struggle for freedom was taking place, that we would not shake the hand of the official head which was fighting the people of the country. When in Russia last year he had seen some of the instruments of torture, and one of the most Conservative of officials of Russia, after taking him down into a cellar where he could not be overheard, and showing him some of these things, said: "Were I a Russian I would be a Nihilist." He was also present at the trial of a Nihilist, and the Judge, as soon as the prosecuting counsel had finished, without hearing a word to be said in defence, sentenced the prisoner to fifteen years in Siberia. While this struggle for freedom was going on in Russia such a visit as this would be taken by the people to be an unfriendly act, and those Members of the House who sympathised with the cause of freedom, those who had spent the best years of their life, at a great sacrifice to themselves, in that House, those who were proud of the Mother of Parliaments, because she was free, would not have her fame sullied by having either Parliament or the nation led, in any sense whatever, into appearing to be against this struggle for freedom.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) said that, although he approached this subject from the same point of view as the mover and seconder of the Amendment—the point of view of sympathisers with the revolution in Russia—he was inclined to think that their action was not altogether well-timed. He would rather have the opinion of Professor Miliukoff on this matter than that of any hon. Member. He asked whether it would be a good thing that at this crisis in the fate of Russia our influence should be in any way diminished. Nothing threw back revolution so much as external questions threatening European or Asiatic war; and it would be worse than a blunder—it would be almost a crime—to take any step which might break up our friendship with Russia. Our influence in Russia should be supreme. For the Russian people it was important that they should be able to look upon us as a friendly nation because of our experience in the progress of constitutionalism; and they could not regard any conversation with a constitutional Monarch like Edward VII. as likely to have any other than a beneficial effect on the mind of the Czar. It was not desirable that the Czar himself should be deprived of the influence of England and be thrown back on the advice of reactionary councillors. All the statements that had been made with regard to Russia showed that Russia's condition was about as bad as it could be. It was now in a state of revolution, and that revolution had been going on for five years. But the Government of Russia had always suffered in a curious way. There was administrative chaos in Russia, and the central Government had always had a curious want of control over subordinate Governments, a fact the recollection of which might have saved us from many of our troubles in Asia. We should recognise that fact and the fact that the Czar himself was in a state of ignorance as to much that went on in his dominions. He knew of a prison in the south of Russia, which he visited two years ago, inside which, when it was full of revolutionaries, a revolutionary journal had actually been printed by the prisoners and circulated by the gaolers. The explanation of that was that the Governor there was a decent sort of man and did not mind. But in other parts where the Governor was of a different temperament unspeakable atrocities took place. Enough of credit had not been given to the Czar for what he had done in the way of social reform. He had recognised that there must be a Duma, and the present Duma, although it was not much of a Duma, had done extraordinary work in limiting the autocratic power of the Czar. Under the guidance of M. Stolypin it had made a great step towards constitutionalism. Unfortunately the country did not march with it, and there was no security for individuals, and the individual agents of autocracy did pretty much as they liked. The revolution in Russia might go on for probably fifty years, but when the history of this revolution was written the Czar would have credit as a well-meaning man. It would be deplorable if we did anything to weaken his influence or English friendship with Russia. He, therefore, hoped the Motion would not be pressed to a division.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I feel the same difficulty as the hon. Member for Salford expressed to the House, in dealing with the constitutional position and action of our own Sovereign in a debate whose tone and temper have been so much influenced by different considerations. But as the hon. Member for South Donegal devoted some time to the constitutional question, I should like, first of all, before I deal with what is obviously the main point of the debate, to say a word or two upon the constitutional question. In the first place, let me say that, as far as the King's action with regard to this visit is concerned, he acts upon the constitutional advice of his Ministers, as he does in all affairs of State, and for this it is the Government which is responsible. There is no distinction in constitutional practice between the act of the King with respect to this visit and his acts in regard to other affairs of State, in which he, as much as any Sovereign ever has done, has always carefully conformed to constitutional practice. The hon. Member for Donegal says it is a breach of constitutional practice that the King should go abroad without a Cabinet Minister. I believe that that has not been the universal practice. But what the House has really a right to demand is not that it should decide the actual methods by which the Cabinet of the day maintains it responsibility for affairs of State, but to demand of the Cabinet to see that that responsibility is maintained. In regard to this visit, as to all the King's visits, the full responsibility of the Cabinet for all affairs of State has been maintained; and with respect to this visit, as has been the case with regard to all the King's previous visits, no public affairs will be transacted which in any way impair, or can impair, the direct responsibility of the Ministers at home. I am further entitled to say this, and it is not saying too much, that the general impression produced, and the influence exercised, by previous visits which the King has paid abroad has been beneficial to the State. That is from the outside point of view. I will say, so far as we are concerned—and I have no doubt it will be confirmed by right hon. Gentlemen opposite—that in the transaction of affairs of State no diplomatic inconvenience, nothing which even trenched upon a breach of the Constitution has taken place in connection with these visits. It is true that Sir Charles Hardinge is going as a member of the King's suite. He is not going in the place of a Cabinet Minister, or in that capacity—that would be unconstitutional, distinctly unconstitutional—but he goes as a member of the King's suite. In so far as he takes any part in discussing diplomatic affairs, he does so on instructions from me, in precisely the same way as any other Ambassador abroad discusses diplomatic affairs at the Court to which he is accredited. I am responsible to the Cabinet for everything which takes place in regard to what Sir Charles Hardinge may do in any diplomatic matter. He is responsible to me in the same way as every Ambassador abroad is responsible to me. I am responsible to the Cabinet, and, in common with the Cabinet, responsible to the House. We shall continue to see that the responsibility is maintained; and though methods have varied in constitutional practice from time to time, I can assure the House that there is as little danger as ever there was of the constitutional responsibility of the Ministers being infringed. One more point I should like to make, which, in my opinion, is not controversial. I said that the visit is undertaken upon the advice of Ministers as every other act of the King has been. I have been asked whether this visit has any special diplomatic significance in the sense that it is to lead to an alliance, or some treaty or convention between the two countries, which is not now known. I think it is desirable, both as regards people at home and people abroad, that I should at once remove any impression of that kind. No negotiations are on foot for the arrangement of any new treaty or convention with the Russian Government, and none will be initiated during this visit. But that the visit will have a political effect, and is desired to have a political effect, is perfectly true. We do desire that it should have an effect beneficial on the relations between the two countries. It is a visit that has been long deferred. A few years ago it could not have taken place. There were incidents familiar to the House which made the relations between the two countries such that a visit of this kind would not have been opportune, and, indeed, hardly possible. That it does take place now is intended to be an evidence of the fact, and to emphasise the fact, that the relations between the two countries are now friendly and that we trust they will continue to be friendly.

Now I come to the objections which have been urged against any visit taking place at all. The hon. Member for East Leeds asked me if I had received resolutions protesting against the visit. Yes; I have received such resolutions. I received also resolutions objecting to the Anglo-Russian Convention couched in terms so identical that the reasons given for objecting to the Convention equally apply to the King's visit. Therefore the Anglo-Russian Convention and the Royal visit, from the point of view of the objectors, are of a piece and hang together. The hon. Member for East Leeds questioned whether Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman would have sanctioned the visit. I can only say that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman cordially supported the Anglo-Russian Convention. So far as the policy of that Convention was concerned he was a cordial and warm supporter of it; and the very ground of that policy is the real object of this visit. Objection is taken on the ground that so long as the internal affairs of Russia do not sometimes have the approval of those who object, Russia should be kept at arm's length—"boycotted" I think was the term which has been used this afternoon—and that there should be neither visit nor Convention. The consequences of such a policy as that must be disastrous to both countries. Do you suppose that if you adopt a policy of that kind, a policy of standing aloof, and refusing to discuss or recognise the Russian Government at all, until you are satisfied with the condition of its internal affairs—do you suppose that you can order events to stand still while you are doing that? Everything that has happened in Asia since the Anglo-Russian Convention was concluded has gone to demonstrate that had we taken up the attitude of refusing to negotiate with Russia, the events which have since taken place on the Indian Frontier and in Persia must have brought the two countries measurably nearer conflict. I am not raising the question whether the details of the Convention are the best we could have got or not. I am raising purely the question of policy, whether we should have taken the line of saying to Russia: "Though our interests touch in Persia and meet in the neighbourhood of the Indian frontier, yet, under present conditions, we refuse to discuss things with you, we will keep you at arm's length, we will have no agreement." What has since happened on the Indian frontier and in Persia has shown more rapidly than anyone could have anticipated how impossible it was for the two countries to stand still and to have remained neutral in regard to Asiatic affairs. We were bound to be driven by the force of events in a contrary direction. We have chosen the policy of agreement in order not only to secure peace, but in order to avoid what some day must have been the danger of conflict. Some years ago, when I sat on the other side of the House, and prior to the Russo-Japanese War, I remember speaking on this very question of the position of the two countries in Asia, and saying that they must either come to an agreement or sooner or later there would be one of the most terrible conflicts in the history of the world. When we came into office we took up what I believe to have been the intention of right hon. Gentlemen opposite—the negotiations for agreement with Russia. We have pursued that and we have made the Convention. The other policy—against the Convention and against the visit—was that of having no agreement, no Convention, no discussion, pushing things even to the point of the nation's withdrawal of our diplomatic representative in Russia. I say that as between those two policies I am and I always have been for a fair and loyal understanding between the two countries, working together in matters where their interests touch. I stand by that, and if the House rejects it or makes it impossible I fall with it. That is a policy of peace. The other policy which is urged upon us to-day is a policy, as I think any impartial student of the course of events must realise, which leads not to peace, but points in the direction of war. [LABOUR cries of "No."] I have no doubt it is not intended by hon. Gentlemen opposite that it should lead to war; but you cannot control the consequences of your policy; and if you press this policy upon the House you must in honesty be prepared to face those consequences. I repeat that of these two policies, one is a peace policy and the other is a policy which sooner or later would be bound to lead to war. [Cries of "No."] I hear hon. Members opposite demurring to this; because they say they do not wish for war, and would not support a war themselves. Have we not had in recent years object lessons enough to show how impossible it is, when things get beyond the control of diplomacy, to answer for what the opinion of the country will be? Is it ever the case, when things have been allowed to get beyond a certain point, and friction has arisen, that those who have been most in favour of peace have been able to control the rising passions of their own country? It is the business of diplomacy to prevent things reaching that point. The policy of hon. Members opposite would lead things to that point; and when they have reached that point, matters would be as much beyond their control as public feeling was during the war in South Africa. As to the Convention, I have said before that everything depends upon the spirit in which it is worked. Consider what it is you are urging upon the House and the Government to do, and what the effect must be upon the spirit in which the two Governments, the Russian and British Governments, must deal with their joint interest at points where those interests touch in contiguous parts of the world. The visit which the King is going to make is a visit which has been long overdue. The hon. Member for East Leeds suggests that it has been forced upon us by the Russian Government. That is not the case. The only pressure in the matter is the pressure of circumstances, and the circumstances are these. The King since he came to the Throne has paid official visits to the German Emperor at Kiel, to

Paris, to the King of Spain, to the King of Italy, to Portugal, and quite lately to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in the close neighbourhood of Russia. To Russia he has not been—a great country and the Emperor a near relation whom the King has not seen for seven years. The King has been to all these other countries, and the Czar has paid since his coronation one visit to Queen Victoria at Balmoral which has not yet been returned. The time has arrived when, if the relations of the two countries are friendly, without marked discourtesy, the visit should not longer be postponed. It is at this moment, however, that you ask the Government here to advise the King to inform the Emperor of Russia that, though he is anxious to visit him as a personal friend, he must make a marked distinction in his case between a visit to the Emperor of Russia and that paid to all those other countries on the ground that the Government does not approve of the condition of the internal affairs in Russia. That would be to make the visit a slight and an insult. Until this afternoon I have not heard aspersions made on the private or personal character of the Emperor of Russia. They are not credited in his own country. The motives and the personal disposition of the Emperor of Russia have always hitherto received respect. When he initiated the Peace Conference at the Hague some years ago everyone gave him credit for being inspired by honourable motives. He is not only the head of the Government in Russia, but he is the head, and is looked up to by people of the most diverse political opinions as the head of their race and of the National Church. If, then, the Government here were to advise the King to take up the attitude suggested towards the Emperor, you might as well tear up the Anglo-Russian Convention; and as to continuing the discussion which has advanced some way in a satisfactory spirit towards an agreement in respect of reforms in Macedonia, its continuation would be bootless. How is the visit of the King regarded by the Russian people? Hon. Members opposite—I think the hon. Member for Leeds spoke of it as if they could speak on behalf of the Russian people, or, at least, the majority of them. Sir, they are mistaken. The information I have is that this visit is welcomed by all the moderate and Liberal elements in Russia, the Liberal element being represented by such men as Professor Miliukoff. There are two sections of Russian opinion where this visit is not welcomed. One is the extreme revolutionary party—which is one party of violence—and the other the extreme reactionary party, which is also a party of violence. The hostile comments I have seen on the visit from Russia have been in newspapers closely connected with what I call the extreme reactionary party of violence. One speaks with diffidence with regard to one's knowledge of a foreign country, and as far as my knowledge goes I believe it is really more complete and comprehensive than that possessed by the hon. Member for East Leeds. The situation with regard to Russia is this. There are two extreme parties—the one reactionary and the other revolutionary. Both are parties of violence, and between them you have the great mass of the Russian people of varying shades of opinion, from what we might call Conservative in this country to what we might call Liberal. The policy advocated in regard to this visit by hon. Members below the Gangway on the other side is bound to play into the hands of one of the two parties—either the reactionary or the revolutionary. I know that the revolutionary party is opposed to the visit. Their motive is a very simple one. It has appeared already in speeches. They think that the Russian Government is going to raise money, but the question of a loan forms no part of the negotiations between the Governments. They know that if Russia remains at peace it is easier to raise a loan, but they also know that if the shadow of war or conflict approaches, or if there are difficulties with foreign countries, it is more difficult for the Russian Government to raise money. They desire to see the raising of any loan prevented because what they wish is to see the whole thing thrown into confusion and broken down. They see an agitation in this country, and they see the fact that our relations in Asia are so delicate and so important—as they must be between two such countries—that there are chances of creating difficulties for their own Government and of diminishing the credit of their country. That is their motive. Is it really contended that we as a Government representing this country, or any party supporting the Government representing this country, can lend itself to a manœuvre of that kind—that we should deliberately adopt a policy to make difficulties between ourselves and another country in order that they may diminish the credit of that country? Our business is to pursue our own way towards agreement and towards peace without regard to any considerations of that kind.

Now I come to a matter which it is almost impossible for me to deal with. I mean the indictment of the hon. Member for East Leeds with regard to the state of the internal affairs in Russia. I do not intend to embark on any comment of the state of the internal affairs in Russia. To condemn them would give offence. For a foreign Minister to take upon himself to defend them would also probably give offence. That is why it is impossible for me to enter upon the subject. But I must state one or two facts, as far as I know them, in order that the House may have, at any rate, a somewhat truer view before it. The hon. Member for East Leeds spoke of the sentences upon the members of the first Duma. My information is that a very large number of them have been sentenced to three months' imprisonment for issuing a manifesto at a time when the country was exceedingly disturbed, which invited the people not to pay taxes and not to take military service. I pass no comment on the merits, but I think the hon. Member gave the sentence as being infinitely more severe than that.

MR. O'GRADY: I said some were three months, others for terms of years and others exile.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I think the hon. Member must have been mixing the first and second Duma together. Some members of the second Duma, eight in number, were sentenced to five years penal servitude, and again I pass no comment on the merits of the sentence or whether they were guilty or not, or what they were guilty of, but they were not sentenced, as the hon. Member represented, for simply expressing Liberal opinions. The charge brought against them was that they were connected with a military organisation, the object of which was to promote a united insurrection and to overturn the Government. That is not the same thing as being sentenced for the expression of Liberal opinions. What the merits of the charge or of the trial are I know absolutely nothing; but it is on that ground, and not on the other, that the sentences were passed.

MR. O'GRADY: As a matter of fact, I think the full facts ought to be stated. I agree that was the charge levelled against them by Stolypin, but he simply arrested them and had them exiled and sent to Siberia with no trial.

SIR EDWARD GREY: My infomation is that there was a trial. But what I want the House to realise is that, when they hear of executions and pogroms in Russia and crime committed on reactionary grounds, they must remember that a great deal of disturbance in Russia is caused also by crimes of the other party of violence—the revolutionary party. Hon. Members have given figures as to executions which have impressed the House; but there is one figure that I have in my mind as to one district in Russia where the number of police is less than a thousand, and where in a period of less than a year and-a-half 305 of these police were assassinated. That is a terrible state of things. Pogroms on the one side and lists of assassinations on the other; and the moral I draw is this. You have in Russia an extraordinary state of things, and it is hopeless to compare that state of things with anything that exists in our own country at the present time. When you come to try to place the responsibility, I think you must bear in mind that in any country as large as Russia, however autocratic or centralised, the Government must be loosely organised. If hon. Members wish to place the responsibility, I recommend them to read, whether with regard to the responsibility of the Czar or the responsibility of M. Stolypin, the speech made by Prince Urusoff to the first Duma two years ago, in which they will see the exceeding difficulty even in the worst cases of knowing exactly where the responsibility for the crimes of violence lies. But surely, when you survey things of this magnitude, the conclusion to which you have to come with regard to any country in which a state of affairs exists such as this of which I have given instances to the House, is that it is to the system of Government rather than to personal responsibility which you must look for a change. The question I ask the House to ask itself is this: "Is the system of Government in Russia getting better, or is it getting worse?" I say, with full knowledge of the reports which we have been receiving in the last few years, that the system of Government has been getting emphatically better; and the evidence is there. There is a Duma in Russia to-day. What is the complaint against it? It is said that it is not elected on a democratic franchise. How long has this House been elected on a democratic franchise? Within my own lifetime only has the change come. Are there no other countries in Europe of high standing whose Parliaments are not elected on a democratic franchise? You can surely find other instances. Three years ago in Russia there was no attempt at a constitutional Parliament of this kind. You have to-day a Duma which, though not elected on a democratic franchise, criticises the Government, votes money, sometimes refuses to vote money, and is composed of different parties, some of them advanced parties, many of them opposed to the Government, and expressing their views and their criticisms in the light of day. And you have this further fact, that Russian Ministers appear before the Duma to expound and justify in public their policy and to argue about it in the light of publicity. If hon. Members will take their minds back to three years ago and will consider whether anyone with knowledge, who had made a study of Russian conditions, had been told that within three years, it would have been the case that there would have been a representative assembly, with freedom of speech in it, before whom Russian Ministers would appear to expound their policy in public, what would his answer have been? I think he would have said that, in so great a country which at that moment three years ago had not a vestige of this sort of thing, and looking to all the experience of history, such a change, even if the Duma be not on a democratic franchise, would be almost too great for it possibly to achieve in so short a time. And when you say the system is not improved, consider the position of Finland now with what it was. Before this particular Duma the other day the question of Finnish autonomy was discussed in a perfectly constitutional manner, not from the point of view of taking it away, but from the point of view of considering what affairs should be left to the autonomous Government of Finland, and what affairs were of such Imperial interest that they must be brought before the Central Government, and if there be a change in the constitution of Finland, it is a change to be made by legislation introduced and justified in public before the Duma. Such a thing could not have happened three or four years ago; it does happen to-day. Does that really stand for nothing when you are taking a complete view? Do you really believe that a radical change in government, a radical remedy for crimes of violence, can only be produced, not by a change of persons, but by a change of system, and that all that has taken place in the few last years in Russia, stands for nothing? I say it means that real progress has been made. Are you going at this moment to help or to hinder the constitutional progress which there has been? I have no doubt whatever that the attempt to bring pressure on Russia, for that is what this Amendment is, would have exactly the opposite effect from that which hon. Members desire.

I would not press the doctrine of non-interference in internal affairs to all lengths. Where we have treaty rights which affect internal affairs we are justified in claiming them. Where we have treaty obligations we are bound to fulfil them to the best of our power. Before now in history where you have had the case of a separate and oppressed nationality, under the dominion of an alien rule, struggling for unity and freedom for itself as against alien rule, the sympathy of this country has borne an honourable and effective part. None of that would I derogate either in the past or in the future, but none of that applies to Russia. You are not going on any treaty rights, and the problem brought before the House is not the case of a separate nationality. On the fringe of Russia there are separate nationalities, but the problem to-day is that of dealing with the heart of Russia, and there you have a great homogeneous people, united in faith and blood, not struggling against an alien race, but face to face with a problem of how to work out their own constitution and their own destiny in their own way, and the policy pressed upon us to-day would, I say distinctly, not help, but hinder. If only sometimes we would stop a little more and turn things round, and, in judging the effect of our own action upon others, would consider what the effect of corresponding actions by others would be upon ourselves. I would not for a moment deprecate the expression of generous and noble feelings, and I have said nothing—at least I hope I have said nothing—in my speech this afternoon to show that I in any way wish to restrict freedom of speech or the expression of really genuine and noble feeling; but it is necessary in expressing those feelings that we should pay some regard to expressing them in a form which will have the effect abroad which we desire, and not the contrary. And I do see sometimes the danger that —not because our feelings are too strong; that I would not deprecate at all; but because we do not stop enough to think what the effect of the particular form of expression we give is likely to be—this country may be isolated, and its influence not increased in the councils of the world. And now I would like to take up the analogy which has already been given by the hon. Member for South Salford in his speech, and try to consider how we should feel under some corresponding pressure upon ourselves. In the time of the South African War, as the hon. Member for South Salford said, the comments of some of the foreign Press in Europe were exceedingly violent upon ourselves. Suppose, after the South African War was over, the head of one of those States whose Press had been violent in criticism of us during the war, had made it publicly known that, though he had visited other sovereigns and other heads of States, he would not visit our own King, or would only visit him in a private, and not in an official, capacity, until this country had granted full self-government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony. I ask hon. Members in all honesty to put this question to themselves. What would the effect have been; would it have been good or would it have been bad; would it have helped or would it have hindered? The effect in this country would have been one of overwhelming resentment. I do not wish to press parallels too far, but I do say that, however strong your feelings may be, however just you may believe them to be, do pay some regard to what the inevitable effect of the expression of them may be. I see in Russia a great race, much of its power undeveloped still, its character still growing, not yet come to its full strength, but with new thoughts and new energies beginning to stir the race. I am convinced it will have a great future, and that it will play a great part in the world. Much of the peace of the world may depend, and much of the welfare, both of Russia and ourselves, must depend upon the relations between us. Hon. Members think that in the course they are advocating this afternoon they are simply advocating a breach between two Governments. They are advocating something which in the long run is bound to make bad blood between two peoples, and I hold that the attitude which the Government have adopted with regard to Russia and this visit is the one which is wholesome and true, and as for its having any prejudical effect or reactionary effect on the internal affairs of Russia, I do not believe that any country in the world would in the long run be less liberal, less progressive, or less strong in the best and fullest sense of the word, for being on good terms with ourselves.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I think it quite unnecessary for me to detain the House for more than a very few minutes by adding anything to the dignified and able speech which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has just delivered. But I think it is desirable and necessary that on behalf of my friends, as well as myself, I should state in the first place that we mean to support His Majesty's Government against the Amendment which has been put down, and, in the second place, state very briefly my reasons for doing so. The hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment told us that it was necessary, and indeed desirable, for us, the representatives of the Commons of England, to enter a protest against the methods of Russian government, and that it was in order that we might enter that protest that he desired his Amendment should be accepted. It is not the business of this House to register protests with regard to the internal administration of countries towards which we have no obligations requiring us to deal with their internal affairs, and in regard to which we have no treaties justifying our interference. I concur with the right hon. Gentleman in drawing that distinction, and it is a distinction which it is folly for this House to forget. I am not sure that we can always look back with unmixed satisfaction at our interference in the internal affairs of other countries with regard to which we have treaty rights or treaty obligations. Those interventions have always been well meaning; they have not always been successful. If you are going to extend the boundaries of such interventions not merely to countries where we have by international law some right of interference, but to great communities like Russia, then you are throwing upon this House responsibilities which it is utterly incapable of carrying out. You will require to exercise rights of judgment for which it has not, and cannot have, the materials. You will be asking it to pass judgments which only history can pass safely, and in which even the future historian, dealing as impartially as he can with the turbid difficulties of previous generations, may find it hard indeed to allocate fairly praise and blame. We are not qualified to occupy this position of judicial authorities over other people, and I cannot see what is gained by our attempting to exercise functions for which we are wholly unsuited. Who is going to be benefited if this Amendment is carried? The Government would disappear. That might conceivably be regarded as an advantage from the party point of view by those of us who in ordinary domestic affairs are opposed to the Government, but I am taking a much broader view than the mere partisan one. Who is going to be benefited? The hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment seemed to think that our great traditional liberties were going to be imperiled by the meeting of uncle and nephew in the Baltic. Our liberties, equally dear to both sides of the House and to every party in the State, depend upon foundations much more solid than can be disturbed, I will not say by friendly interviews, but by the action of any number of foreign potentates, or any number of foreign potentates in alliance. I, therefore, exclude altogether that part of the argument of the hon. Gentleman on which I do not think he dwelt at any length. Who, then, outside these islands is going to benefit? The hon. Gentleman appears to desire that we should pass a kind of abstract resolution in favour of what on the Continent are called Liberal principles, and in this country are neither Liberal nor Conservative principles, but principles which are the common property of every citizen of Great Britain. I do not think we require to pass abstract resolutions. I do not think anything is to be gained by doing so. Are we going to further the cause in Russia of those constitutional principles which we in Great Britain regard as the most precious of our heritage? I think nothing can be added—at all events, nothing can be added effectively by me—to the arguments put forward by the right hon. Gentleman. Manifestly barren interventions like those of this House will be interpreted either as insolent marks of superiority claimed by this nation over other nations; or, if that is not the interpretation put upon them, they will be regarded as marks of hostility by the British nation against the Russian nation. Neither of those interpretations is going to help the cause of ordered freedom and stable liberty in Russia; neither will help the inevitably slow growth of free institutions rooted in a long historical autocracy. Nor is there anything that can be done by this House of a character which is capable of being interpreted as hostile intervention in Russian affairs, which can do anything but harm to the cause which it is intended to serve.

The right hon. Gentleman touched with great tact on the difficult question of what has been actually occurring in Russia. I am not going to touch on that difficult and delicate ground. He has more knowledge of it than I have. I will only venture to remind the House that what we are seeing now is a community diverse in blood, diverse in origin, enormous in numbers, not advanced in modern civilisation or in modern constitutional practice, suddenly brought into immediate contact and collision with the most advanced Western views. It is the contact between this old and unaltered system and the new ideas with which we have long been familiar—and which are indeed commonplaces in the West of Europe—it is that sudden conflict which has produced and is producing not only admirable fruit but indefinite difficulties—crimes it may be on both sides. The world has never seen a nation or community go through the trials to which Russia is now subjected without matter for infinite regret, it may be for deep condemnation, although also with hope for the future. But we cannot help and we cannot hinder, except by resolutions of this kind, the gradual—it can only be gradual—and slow—it can only be slow—development of free autonomous institutions upon the old, traditional, and accepted root—accepted until very recent years by the great body of the Russian community—of autocracy. Let us not be guilty of interfering with it by any rash—I think undignified, certainly hasty and unthought-out—intervention in matters in which we have no immediate concern.

I turn, then, and ask my second question. If this resolution is not going to benefit the slow-growing liberties of Russia how is it going to affect the relations between this country and the Russian Empire? I think all that has fallen from the Secretary of State in that regard is absolutely justified. We criticised the details of the Russian Convention, as I think the right hon. Gentleman himself will admit, in no hostile or controversial spirit; but we on this side of the House are as anxious as hon. Members on the other side, and, I believe, hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, for good relations between the two great empires which along thousands of miles have practically conterminous frontiers, and who cannot be indifferent to their mutual relations, not as regards internal government, but as regards external affairs common to both. Did hon. Members below the gangway raise a voice against the Anglo-Russian Convention? Did they attack it? We criticised some of its details. It was their business, holding their views, to attack, not the details, but the Convention itself. I do not remember that one of them criticised the Government for entering into a treaty with the Czar of Russia, as representing the Russian nation. If you can enter into a treaty with the Czar of Russia as representing the Russia nation, is the Sovereign of this country to be forbidden by this House to visit the Czar of Russia as representing the Russian nation? The two things hang together in this sense—Russia only exists, in an international sense, through her Government, and you can only treat with Russia through her Government. You may say that the Government of Russia does not represent Russia. I do not know what means you have of coming to that conclusion, and I do not know what means you have of substituting any other representative of the Russian nation for the Government which you say does not represent them. We have to take, and we do gladly take the Russian Government as it is, as for diplomatic and international purposes representing the Russian people. And we can do nothing else. If you are going to take that Government as representing the Russian people, it is folly to say that the Sovereign of Great Britain is not to visit the Sovereign of Russia. If you are going to accept the other alternative and say that for international purposes, as for other purposes, the Russian Government does not represent the Russian people, you have no right to make treaties with them at all. You must put them outside the comity of nations as far as you are concerned. You must say: "We will have no truck with you. We will have no international dealings with you. We will enter into no treaties with you, however desirable those treaties may be for preserving mutual amity and peace." Is any man in this House prepared to accept that second alternative? It is the only logical conclusion from the Amendment before us. If that Amendment is carried it means that, until the Russian Government has taken the precise form which is agreeable to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway—and I am not sure that I know what that precise form is—we refuse to have dealings with them; we refuse to enter into treaties with them; we refuse to deal with those questions, vital though they be to the peace and happiness of the people of both countries which must from time to time arise between two great conterminous communities. That conclusion is really preposterous. I do not believe any man in this House, if he soberly and quietly considers it, will accept it, and yet it is the only conclusion to which you will be logically driven if you say that an official visit cannot be paid by the head of the one great Empire to the head of the other great Empire. I do not profess to judge, I am not in a position to judge, whether diplomacy between the two countries will be aided by the visit of the Sovereign of this country to the Sovereign of Russia. The Government are responsible for that. They know the facts; they have come to the conclusion that the path of international diplomacy will be smoothed by this visit. We take, as indeed we must take, their word for it. I think it is extremely natural and probable; but, at all events, whether they are right or wrong, this is absolutely certain, that having taken that decision they cannot go back upon it. Having stated in public that the visit is to be an official visit, and then in consequence of a debate like this to say: "No; we greatly disapprove of what has been going on during the last few years in Russia, and we insist upon the visit being changed from one of a public to one of a private character,"—that is to ask the Government to put a deliberate insult upon the Russian Government, which for these purposes must be taken as representing the Russian people, and an insult which would not only be regarded by the Russian Government as an insult, but which, I am convinced, would be so regarded by that very population on whose behalf hon. Members below the gangway, without any particular title, so far as I know, profess to speak in this House. I believe the Russian people, however you define that term, would as bitterly resent the action taken by hon. Gentlemen below the gangway as would their responsible diplomatic representatives. In these circumstances, while, of course, we must leave with the Government the responsibility of saying that this is to the advantage of the peaceful and diplomatic relations between the two countries, if they tell us that is their opinion as the responsible Government of the country, we shall gladly and heartily support them to the best of our ability in repudiating the doctrine of intervention by this House in the internal affairs of other friendly countries, which can conduce neither to our dignity nor to our success, nor to the cause of freedom in those countries on behalf of which we appear nominally to intervene.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) said there was an old saw in politics that when the two front benches in the House of Commons combined the cause of liberty must look out for its safety. The Leader of the Opposition had expressed surprise that it should have been thought that any danger would accrue from uncle and nephew meeting together, but he had overlooked the fact that the heads of the two Empires would not meet as uncle and nephew, but as King and Czar. It was because the visit was official, and not personal and domestic, that he and his friends objected to it. The right hon. Gentleman wanted to know what form of government they thought should obtain in Russia. They did not seek to interfere in the internal affairs of Russia, or as to what form there government should take. They made their protest against the official campaign of murder which was carried on against those who were endeavouring to secure reforms. Surely, that was a very different point of view from that in regard to treaties with Russia. The hon. Member for Bolton had said that it was one thing to have business relations with a man when compelled to do so, but that it was another thing to invite that man to your house as your guest. That disposed of the treaty objection. The hon. and gallant Member for Monmouthshire had referred to a district in Russia which contained a large number of settlers from Wales; but the hon. and gallant Gentleman might have informed the House that in that very district 1,500 men had been shot down in the streets for taking part in political and industrial agitation; and he was quite certain that the people of Wales and in that particular part of Russia would not desire that the head of the British Empire should countenance a Government responsible for an atrocity of that kind. Now, he came to the speech which everyone had listened to with very great interest, he meant that of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. That right hon. Gentleman had made it perfectly clear that he intended neither to excuse nor to condemn the policy being pursued by the Russian Government towards the Reform Party in Russia; that was none of his business. That seemed to him to be the strongest reason yet adduced why this proposed official visit should be abandoned. We were proposing to put the King into a position which the Foreign Secretary refused—deliberately refused—to occupy. For the King of Great Britain to pay an official visit to the Czar of Russia was to condone the atrocities for which the Czar's Government, and the Czar personally, must be held responsible; and on this point he would desire to ask the attention of the Foreign Secretary for one minute.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I must ask the hon. Member not to use the word atrocities in that connection. It is not in order. [Cries from the LABOUR Benches of "Why?"] The hon. Member can allude to anything that he states to be a fact and found any argument upon it, but it is not in order to speak in that way of a friendly Power. [Cries of "Oh!"]

MR. KEIR HARDIE: The remark may have been premature at this stage of my argument, but before I conclude I shall endeavour to justify it. [Cries from the LABOUR Benches of "Repeat it."] The question I desire to put to the Foreign Secretary is——

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is now practically repeating the word I asked him not to use. He is perfectly justified in stating any fact which he knows to be true, but he is not in order in using the word "atrocities" for which the Czar and his Government are personally responsible.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: My difficulty, Sir, is this. I know no other word in the English language to express my meaning.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have asked the hon. Member as a matter of order not to use that word, and he has again practically repeated it. I think that he will see that he should carry out my ruling.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I have not repeated the word. I have said that there is no other word to express my meaning, and that in the course of my argument I shall submit facts and deduce arguments from them which will justify the use of the term.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has now again practically used the word which I must ask him to withdraw. [Cries of "Not at all."] It is a matter of order, and I am here to carry out the Rules of the House, of which this plainly is one.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: I know not, Mr. Emmott, on what you base your ruling. I know of no rule of order or debate in this House which precludes the use of the word "atrocity" as applied to a set of facts which appear to justify it. I have no desire, Sir, to disobey your ruling. My reputation does not lie in that line. I have always sought to observe a decorous part in debate, but I cannot permit myself to be muzzled in the use of language [Ministerial cries of "Order"] which I believe is justifiable.

*The CHAIRMAN: Of course the hon. Member will see that it is for me to carry out the rules of order, and I say most distinctly that the use of the word "atrocities" in this connection is not in order in this House. Words having a similar meaning have been ruled out of order in previous debates even in regard to Russia. I hope the hon. Member will carry out my ruling. He is not in order in using the word "atrocities," which means an atrocious thing and is clearly an opprobrious term to use in regard to a foreign riendly Power.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): It is perfectly true—perfectly true. [General cries of "Order."]

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: May I put a Question to the Foreign Secretary on which I feel strongly? It is whether this proposed visit of His Majesty to the Czar was first initiated by the King himself or pressed upon him by the Cabinet.

*The CHAIRMAN: Has the hon. Member withdrawn the word [Cries of "No"] as I directed him to do?

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: I have not withdrawn it. I did not understand you to ask me to withdraw it, but to refrain from using it again.

*The CHAIRMAN: I asked the hon. Member to withdraw it because it gives offence. It is a technical matter of order, and I must ask him to withdraw it. [Cries from the Labour Benches of "Stick to it."]

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: One of the points I intended to make in the course of my remarks was whether the result of this visit would be to limit free discussion in this country of Russian affairs and of the agreement with Russia and France as has been done there. I hope you will not insist on my withdrawing the term I used. I have no desire to disobey your ruling.

*The CHAIRMAN: I must insist on the hon. Member withdrawing.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: Then I must decline, Sir. Absolutely and completely.

Mr. MADDISON (Burnley): I rise to a point of order. Is it not your ruling that the term "atrocities" cannot be applied to a Government, but only to a set of facts which are actually connected with the term "government?" I do not understand your ruling to be that the word "atrocities" cannot be used at all, but only when applied to a friendly Government.

*The CHAIRMAN: My ruling is that the word as used by the hon. Member is making use of an opprobrious term as applied to a foreign friendly Government.

An HON. MEMBER: It is an insult.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): As a point of order and of fact, may I ask whether the words "atrocities" and "atrocious" have not been repeatedly used in recent debates with regard to the Government of the Congo?

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member in this case stated that the Government of Russia and the Czar were personally responsible for these atrocities. I have asked him to withdraw the word, and I again ask him to do so, because the debate cannot proceed unless he does so. Otherwise I shall have to take notice of it. I shall have to name him and to suspend the sitting. I, therefore, sincerely hope the hon. Member will withdraw.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: On a point of order, it will be in the recollection of every one that the word "atrocities" has been used in this House with reference to Turkey. [Cries of "Order."]

*THE CHAIRMAN: I cannot withdraw my ruling in regard to this matter. If the hon. Member will not withdraw, I shall be under the painful necessity of naming him. I am extremely anxious to avoid that. Do I understand him absolutely to refuse? [Cries of "Withdraw," and some cries of "Stick to it."]

MR. KEIR HARDIE: May I point out that the Government of Russia is an autocratic Government and if atrocities are being committed by the officials who else is responsible?

*THE CHAIRMAN: I must again ask the hon. Member to withdraw; and I cannot take any more time over it. I have pointed out why he should withdraw and why I am anxious that the debate should not be brought to a conclusion. Will he withdraw or not? [Renewed cries of "No" and "Withdraw."]

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): May I, for the sake of obtaining information and making an appeal to the hon. Gentleman, ask this question? I apprehend, so far as I understand the rules of the House, that it is not out of order to describe a particular set of facts compendiously as "atrocities," or "atrocious," or a series of crimes, or what we hold to be a series of crimes. So far as the hon. Gentleman is using that compendious term to describe what in his opinion are cruel and wicked acts there is no breach of order committed. The only point is whether in describing the direct responsibility of a foreign Government he should apply the term "atrocious" or "atrocities." If that is, as I believe it, the real state of Parliamentary law on the subject, I think the hon. Member might very reasonably respond to your appeal to withdraw, and distinguish between the two things. [General cries of "Withdraw."]

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I would be sorry to prevent a division, and if that is going to be the outcome of my being suspended, I will sacrifice my convictions for the sake of the division, and withdraw the word so far as it applies to the Czar and his Government. An hon. Member had once agreed to withdraw a certain statement made by him because he admitted that nobody would believe him. He objected to the visit for two reasons. Some of them, despite their Socialist and Republican sentiments, were jealous for the reputation of the King. He desired to repeat the Question he had put to the Foreign Secretary and which he hoped would be answered, did the initiative for this visit come from His Majesty himself or was it pressed on him, somewhat unwillingly on his part, by the Cabinet?

SIR EDWARD GREY: It is obviously impossible to say with regard to any act of State whether it was initiated by the Sovereign or by the Government. It would be quite fatal to all constitutional practice to state how the initiative arises in these cases. All I can say is this, that with regard to this visit, as with regard to any act of State, the King is acting upon the advice of his Ministers, properly given to him in the ordinary constitutional manner.

MR. KEIR HARDIE said that if the initiative did not come from the King, but from the Government, it would do much to enhance the King's position and reputation among the bulk of the people of this country.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The hon. Member at all events is perfectly justified in drawing this conclusion, that the responsibility for the whole thing is the responsibility of the Government.

MR. KEIR HARDIE said that an attempt had been made to minimise the condition of affairs in Russia, and to make it appear that the Czar and his responsible advisers were not to be held responsible. If time permitted, he could prove, and give chapter and verse for it, that the Czar and his advisers not only connived at what was done, but approved it, and decorated those responsible for these butcheries and pogroms that shocked the world, and that they relieved from office those who refused to be parties to the brutalities which were perpetrated day by day. He would not go into the figures of the official hangings and shootings, except so far as to say they showed no diminution; that the policy of repression was being proceeded with as rigorously at this moment as at any period during the past two years. The first Duma was elected on the basis of popular franchise, but it was found to be too independent, and the Czar, who had pledged his word to respect the liberties of the Duma, tore up the Constitution, dissolved the Duma, took away the franchise, and had the Members of the Duma exiled, imprisoned, or otherwise disposed of. He objected to this visit for reasons of State. The Czar of Russia was a man whose word was not to be taken in diplomatic matters. It was a danger to any country to have an alliance or agreement with a country for which he was autocratically responsible. Within his own territories were nations who were struggling for freedom—Finland, Poland, and Georgia, a country which years ago was admitted into the Russian Empire under certain conditions as to language, law, and worship, which conditions had now all been violated. In that case, the Czar had broken his pledges, and had outraged the entire spirit of the agreement. The Duma was created with a great flourish of trumpets, but there were those who still believed that its creation was not due to political but to financial considerations; that the Russian Empire was bankrupt; that the financiers of Europe refused to advance further moneys to a country which was torn by internal dissensions, and whose securities were not safe. As soon as the Duma was elected a new loan of £90,000,000 was floated in the Anglo-French market. At the present moment Russia was in urgent need of funds, and a new loan of at least £100,000,000, and, if he might venture a guess on this matter, he would ask whether the Government had not pressed His Majesty to go to Russia, and whether the big financiers in the City did not press the Government in the matter. Without some security there would be no fresh loan, and already since this visit was first spoken of Russian securities had increased in value in the City 3½ per cent., representing a net increase in value of £4,500,000. Increased confidence had already been caused by the proposed visit of the King, and what would follow from that visit would probably be a fresh loan which would put millions into the pockets of those whose power to-day was greater than that of Kings, Czars and Emperors. For these and other reasons he would oppose this Vote, and go into the lobby against it. It was not for the Labour Members to appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite in this matter, but there was a Liberal tradition to maintain in this case. Treaties did not alter the hard facts, and sixty years ago all England was ringing with indignation at the treatment meted out to a Liberal reformer in Italy, and our representative was withdrawn from Naples in order to enforce our protest on the Italian Government. If that was done sixty years ago, in the situation to-day the King should not be asked to place the seal of his approval on what was being done in Russia. He hoped the result of this Vote would be to make it clear to the King that the country was far from delighted with this visit. If the breaking off of this visit now would offend the Czar of Russia, better far would it be to offend the Czar than the best blood and conscience of the British Empire.

Mr. MADDISON said he approached this question from the point of view of a man who hated the system of government obtaining in Russia, who detested many of the acts that had occurred there, and who had as great a desire to assist the reform party in Russia as any one in this country. His great desire was that it should not go forth from this Committee that the division lobbies separated the lovers of Russian freedom from those who had no such love. Nothing could be more fatal than for it to be thought that the men who supported this reduction were exactly the number of men in this country who wished well to the reform party in Russia. So far as he was concerned, he quite admitted there were many elements in this reform movement in Russia, and, as in all these matters of reform, there were many elements which were totally subversive of nationality, and which would sap the fabric of Empire. One or two points had been emphasised very much by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, and also alluded to by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but which no one who supported this reduction had attempted to answer, and without an answer he did not see how any Member could go into the lobby in support of the Amendment. The first point was this, that the visit of the King to Russia was not an isolated thing which could be discussed separately from international policy as a whole. It was only part, and by no means the most important part, of the State policy which the Government had adopted. The Leader of the Opposition had asked hon. Members why they had not opposed the Anglo-Russian Treaty. That was the time to have made their protest. But they had not done that, and he thought that they had wisely not done it; but were they to be told that it was right to make the treaty, and that it was wrong to be parties to the King's paying a State visit to Russia and to the Czar. The hon. Member had discriminated between that Ruler and the "best blood of this nation," and he was willing to join in that discrimination in favour of "the best blood of the nation." But the Czar in this matter was to him only an international instrument, and the question was, were they to risk conflict in many parts of the world, were they to stop a great movement for international peace, and put the value of that international peace against the altogether doubtful policy of trying to interfere in the affairs of a great country like Russia? That brought him to his second point. During this discussion not one hon. Member, certainly not the hon. Member for Merthyr, had set out in a single sentence how this Motion of their's would help the cause of reform in Russia. Suppose this Motion was carried, what would be the effect of it on the reform party in Russia? That great party was marching on those steady lines with which he thoroughly agreed. He happened to be a step by step politician, and that brought him into terrible conflict with his hon. friends opposite, but at any rate he thought that they were forward steps. However that might be, the only hope of Russia rested with that great body of reformers who were steadily marching onward, covering every position they took and holding it, and then going on further. The Russian autocracy would never ultimately fall save before this steady onward march of the reformers. But how would that great party be affected if they carried this Amendment? What would it be that they had done? They would have united around the forces of reaction in Russia all that great mass of Russians who were neither revolutionary nor reactionary, who looked upon the Czar as a great person, and who held all sorts of superstitious views about these matters. When they realised the vote that had been given in the British House of Commons, they would probably construe it as being adverse and an insult to the only form of government that they knew. They would bring all that great mass of people around the reactionaries and leave the party of reform absolutely hopeless. [LABOUR cries of dissent.] He said this in spite of the sneers of hon. Members opposite, and he assessed their sneers far higher than their praise. There had been few questions which had given him more trouble than this, because he shared the aspirations of Russian lovers for freedom and for constitutional government, and for his part he wished them God-speed. But they were to-day in the House of Commons, and they were not dealing with a mere sectional resolution at a congress, but were touching great world movements which must be guided by the steady and firm hands of men who knew the details of these great questions. He could not support the Amendment, because he thought that it would not do the slightest good to the great reform party in Russia.

MR. H. C. LEA, who rose amid loud cries of "Divide," was understood to say that he sympathised with the views of the proposer and seconder of the Amendment, and, after having listened to the various speeches, he did not intend to apologise for the vote he purposed to give. He frankly supported the Amendment, and he objected to this state visit of a constitutional monarch to Russia. Conscientiously, he could not see any great State reason that had been given to induce this Government and this country to lend itself to the encouragement of a condition of affairs in Russia which was a disgrace to humanity. He ventured to say that when the account of the debate was read throughout the country they would agree with what the hon. Member had said, with the workmen of the country behind him to a man, in regard to the reasons which had been given in support of the Amendment. There could be no doubt that the working classes and the lower middle classes thoroughly agreed with the hon. Member's view of this question. Our past history showed that the people viewed with disfavour any government which savoured of tyranny or of cruelty. When they recollected that on that bloody Red Sunday the Czar did not face his responsibility like a man, but fled to Peterhoff, while his poor people were being shot down, then he must say that it was a standing disgrace to this Government that they should recommend the Sovereign to go to Russia and give a *cachet* to that kind of thing. He had no hesitation in saying that were this approaching visit divested of its State character it would not realise the prophecies of the Secretary of State. Indeed the Russian people, governed as they were to-day, had no means of expressing their disapproval of any acts of foreign policy or home policy. For years past they had been dragooned and disciplined by hands of the most callous cruelty, and to tell him that a population ignorant as it was, and devoid of all vestiges of liberty, would regard the visit of the Sovereign, divested of its State character, as an insult to the Russian nation, was to insult their intelligence in that House. The Czar of Russia might be a good man, and they recognised that he was the author of the Peace Conference, still, for all that, his responsibility for Red Sunday rested with him, and could only rest with him, and it ought to be no part of the duty of this Government to give him any credit as the head of that great nation.

MR. GRAYSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Colne Valley) rose to speak.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put." [Cries of "No."]

MR. GRAYSON: Mr. Chairman, I refuse to allow the Question to be put.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

*MR. GRAYSON: I have as much right to speak as anyone else. I refuse to be ordered. [Cries of "Order."]

Question, "That the Question be now put," put, and agreed to.

Question put accordingly, "That Item A (Salaries, Wages, and Allowances) be reduced by £100."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 59; Noes, 225. (Division List No. 114.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Barnes, G. N.
Bowerman, C. W.
Byles, William Pollard
Cleland, J. W.
Clynes, J. R.
Cooper, G. J.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Curran, Peter Francis
Devlin, Joseph
Dillon, John
Flynn, James Christopher
Glover, Thomas
Grayson, Albert Victor
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Harwood, George
Hazleton, Richard
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hodge, John
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jowett, F. W.
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Snowden, P.
Steadman, W. C.
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Watt, Henry A.
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Charles Duncan and Mr. O'Grady.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Ashley, W. W.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Cameron, Robert
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)

Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craik, Sir Henry
Crosfield, A. H.
Davies,David(Montgomery Co)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Erskine, David C.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Gretton, John
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hope, JamesFitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones,SirD.Brynmor(Swansea)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire)
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Leese, Sir JosephF.(Accrington
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Rt. Hn.Walter(Dublin,S)
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Iver, Sir Lewis
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeason, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Hn.Arthur (Ormskirk)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Strachey, Sir Edward
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'dUniv.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thompson,J.WH.(Somerset,E.
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Waring, Walter
Wason,Rt.Hn.E (Clackmannan
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Original Question again proposed.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. J. A. Pease.*)

Adjourned accordingly at Five Minutes before Five o'clock till Wednesday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 10th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, without Amendments.

Burnley Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2) Bill; Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

The Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

PETITIONS.

HYPOTHEC ABOLITION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Greenock, against; to upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Keswick, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Birkenhead; Everton; Liverpool (two); Murton; Oxford; Rotherhithe; Shiney Row and South Molton; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Greenock, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (RECESS).

The following Papers, presented by Command of His Majesty during the Whitsuntide Recess, were delivered to the Librarian of the House of Commons during the Recess, pursuant to the Standing Order of the 14th August, 1896:—

1. TREATY SERIES (No. 14, 1908).

Copy of Declaration between the United Kingdom and Paraguay amending the Treaty of Commerce of 16th October, 1884. Signed at Asuncion, 14th March, 1908.

2. MINES AND QUARRIES.

Copy of General Report and Statistics for the year 1906, Part IV., Colonial and Foreign Statistics; Statistics relating to Persons employed, Output, and Accidents at Mines and Quarries in the British Colonies and in Foreign Countries.

3. BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy of Regulations for Secondary Schools in force from 1st August, 1908, in Wales and Monmouthshire.

Ordered, "That the said Papers do lie upon the Table."

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented of Report No. 558 (Swaziland, Annual Report for 1906–7) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S FUND.

Account presented, of the Receipts and Expenditure under the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act from 1st January to 31st December, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [167.]

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Secretary for Scotland providing for the early closing of certain shops in the Burgh of Greenock [by Act] to lie upon the Table.

VIVISECTION (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Fifth Report of the Commissioners, with Appendix (Minutes of Evidence, March 1908, with Appendices and Index) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

INTOXICATING LIQUOR LICENCES (ENGLAND AND WALES) (TRANSFERS).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 1st May; Mr. Charles Roberts]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 168.]

POLLING DISTRICTS (CITY OF LONDON.)

Copy presented of Order made by the Justices of the City of London altering the Polling Districts within the City [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE (COUNTIES AND BOROUGHS, ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copies presented, of Reports of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary for the Year ended 29th September, 1907, [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 169.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4004, 4006 to 4008, 4010, and 4011 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS' IRELAND (PENSION FUND).

Annual Accounts presented, of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st December, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (FINANCIAL STATEMENT).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 2nd June; Mr. Buchanan]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 170.]

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House

ARUNDEL PORT.

Copy of Annual Report and General Account of the Commissioners of Arundel Port for the period from 25th March, 1907 to 25th March, 1908 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Liquor Licences and Death Duties.

MR. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the Paper ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 14th May, 1900, setting forth the practice of the Inland Revenue Department in dealing for Death Duty purposes with the various interests connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors, and in which it is assumed that the licence will continue to be renewed, was issued before the case of Sharp and Wakefield was decided in the House of Lords; if this Paper was superseded by another Paper, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 3rd May, 1894, in which the practice of the Inland Revenue Department in dealing for Death Duty purposes with the various interests connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors is stated to come within the general rule applicable to all property, namely, that the value for Death Duty purposes is the amount it would fetch if sold in the open market at the time of the death of the deceased; if he is aware that the first-named Paper has been reprinted for sale to the public in order to meet the heavy demand for the Paper, and with the date 1908 upon it; if he is aware that it is being circulated in the country as if it was still in force; and if he will take steps to have this superseded Paper withdrawn from circulation, or dealt with in such manner as may prevent the public being misled as to the practice of the Inland Revenue Department.

†*(Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.)* The Paper in question was issued prior to the decision in the case of Sharp v. Wakefield, and before the passing of The Finance Act, 1894. The practice of the Board of Inland Revenue is correctly set forth in the Paper of 1894 to which my hon. friend refers. I am aware that the Paper of 1890 has been reprinted by the Stationery Office, and, though its interest is mainly historical, I see no sufficient reason for withdrawing it from circulation.

Promotions in the Customs Service.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that Mr. E. H. Hodgson, of the Customs, twenty-eight years of age, with only nine years' service and with a salary of £90 in 1903, was recently promoted to a post carrying a salary of £320 to £400; that Mr. W. Christian, twenty-eight years of age, with only ten years service and with a salary of £90 in 1903, was recently promoted over the heads of about seventy of his seniors to a post carrying a salary of £320 to £400; that Mr. W. Trotter, with only ten years service and £100 allowance as secretary to the Chairman of the Board, was recently promoted to a post carrying £320 a year; and that Mr. P. S. Brandon, twenty-five years of age, and with only seven years service, was recently promoted to a post carrying £200 a year; whether he will explain the system of promotion by selection which has brought these results about; and whether, seeing that highly-qualified collectors have also been passed over by certain of their juniors, he will now cause an independent investigation, eliciting evidence from subordinates as well as superiors, to be made into the system of promotion at the Custom House.

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† To be substituted for the Answer printed and circulated on June 4.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Messrs. Hodgson and Trotter are clerks in the Secretary's Office, and have been promoted in that office in the ordinary course. Mr. Brandon is a clerk in the port establishment, who has also been promoted in the ordinary course. The only special selection is that of Mr. Christian, who was a port clerk transferred to the Secretary's Office, and his selection has not affected the prospects of any of his seniors on the port establishment, who have no claim whatever to appointments to posts in the secretariat. The hon. Member has correctly stated the pay and service of these gentlemen, but I should point out that Messrs. Hodgson, Trotter, and Christian have passed through an intermediate grade by ordinary promotion. The special selection of officers other than collectors for the higher ranks of the collectorate was contemplated in the Goschen Minute, and is occasionally adopted, but as a general rule the appointments are filled by ordinary promotion, and in such cases no collecter who has shown himself properly qualified for promotion has been passed over. On every occasion the claims of any collectors who may have passed over before are carefully considered.

Discharge of two Ex-apprentice Coopers from Deptford Victualling Yard.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can state why two ex-apprentice coopers are being discharged this week from Deptford Victualling Yard, whilst almost simultaneously orders have been given to the men employed in the cooperage that from to-day they must go on working overtime; and whether he can see his way to inquire immediately into the matter in order that the discharge of the two men in question may be averted.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The overtime referred to is of a few days duration only, and is necessary to meet an immediate special requirement. It will cease on Saturday next. The services of the two ex-apprentice coopers will not be required after this week.

Workmen's Trains between Tilbury, Grays, and London.

MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether Colonel Yorke has yet reported with reference to the proposed workmen's trains between Tilbury and Grays and London; and whether, and when, the Board of Trade will make an Order for such trains.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I have received Colonel Yorke's Report of his inquiry with regard to workmen's trains on the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway, and am in communication with the railway company thereon. Pending the result of this communication I cannot say whether it will be necessary for the Board of Trade to make an Order on the railway company.

Insurance of Licences and Income-Tax Returns.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether premiums paid for insurance of licences are allowed to be deducted from profits before payment of income-tax; and, if not, will he say why a distinction is made between that form of insurance and any other.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Where premiums for insuring licences are paid by the occupier of licensed premises, the amount of such premiums is allowed as a trade expense against the profits of the trade carried on in such licensed premises by the occupier, whether owner or tenant.

Supply of Bar Soap for the Navy.

COLONEL WALKER (Lancashire, Widnes): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state the name of the firm whose contract was accepted for the supply of bar soap to the Navy, and what was the price quoted for this year, last year, and the previous year.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The desirability, or otherwise, of publishing the names of successful contractors is at present under consideration. Pending a general decision, there is no special reason in this case for stating to whom the contract was allotted in any of the years named. The prices are in all cases regarded as confidential in the public interests. In each of the years in question the contract was allotted to the firms who tendered lowest for suitable samples.

Irish Survey Estimates.

MR. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can state the amounts estimated for the Irish Survey, year by year, for the four years ending the 31st March, 1909; how much has been spent at Southampton in administration of these amounts for the three years ended the 31st March, 1908; and how much has been earmarked for a similar purpose for the current year.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The amounts included in the Survey Estimates for the four years ended 31st March, 1909, for Irish Survey services were approximately:—

	£
1905-6 - - - - -	93,000
1906-7 - - - - -	95,500
1907-8 - - - - -	92,300
1908-9 - - - - -	98,100

The amounts apportioned for administration at Southampton in connection with these services are approximately:—

	£
1905-6 - - - - -	4,200
1906-7 - - - - -	4,500
1907-8 - - - - -	4,500
1908-9 (estimated) - - - -	5,200

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Dismissal of an Admiralty Clerk.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the case of the dismissal of Mr. Harry Edward Bockett, an accountant clerk in the Department of the Director of Works, Admiralty, has been brought to his notice; and whether, in view of the punishment decreed, he will cause an inquiry to be held into the case, with a view to the decision being reconsidered.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): The circumstances of the case in question have been already fully investigated, and it is not considered necessary to hold a further inquiry.

SIR WILLIAM BULL: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Mr. Bockett was for seventeen years in the employ of the Admiralty; that his offence was merely the drafting of a letter for another clerk, and that he was dismissed because he refused to give the name of the superior officer who instigated the writing of the letter?

DR. MACNAMARA: I have been fully into all the papers. I do not think the hon. Gentleman has quite accurately stated the facts, but at any rate I am convinced that absolute justice was done.

Old-age Pensions—Regulations.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the regulations to provide for the carrying out of the provisions of the Old-age Pensions Bill will be issued by the Treasury; and if there will be an opportunity of considering them before the Bill passes through Committee stage.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The Treasury has no power to make regulations under the Bill until it has become law, nor would it be practicable to draft regulations to provide for the detailed administration of the scheme until the scheme itself has taken final legislative shape.

Mr. FELL pointed out that it might be very necessary to have some idea of what the regulations would be when they were discussing the Bill in Committee.

Old-Age Pensions—Finance.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if the sums of £1,200,000 required this year and £6,000,000 required next year for the service of old-age pensions were calculated upon the scale of payment and the numbers of pensioners under the scheme as unfolded in the Budget speech, or upon the lower scale of payment and the smaller numbers who will become entitled to pensions under the Bill now before the House.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The estimates, which, as explained by my right hon. friend in introducing the Budget, must be regarded as very conjectural, were based on the proposals as elaborated up to the time when the Budget statement was made, including some allowances in respect of various disqualifications the scope of which had not then been precisely defined. The modifications which have since been made in the scheme, as embodied in the Bill, will involve slight additions to the cost in some directions and slight reductions in others; but I do not think that the net effect of these modifications upon the total cost will be appreciable, nor can I accept the suggestion made in the Question that the effect of the alterations is to narrow materially the scope of the scheme.

Mr. FELL asked if it was not the fact that in the Bill as drafted a smaller number of pensions was provided for.

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby): May I ask if it will be competent to discuss on this Bill—in view of the many Resolutions which have been passed—any alteration which would involve a larger outlay?

Mr. SPEAKER: That will be a matter for the Chairman of the Committee.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. William Jones and Sir Joseph Leese; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Mackarness and Major Dunne.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Major McMicking; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. William Jones.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

PAWNING INDUSTRIAL TOOLS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Pawning of Tools, Implements, Instruments, or Appliances used in connection with any manual trade or handicraft," presented by Mr. Tyson Wilson; supported by Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Jowett, Mr. Thomas Frederick Richards, Mr. Summerbell, and Mr. Walsh.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 261.]

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, "That Mr. Ashley be discharged from the Select Committee on the Port of London Bill."

Ordered, "That Viscount Castlereagh be added to the Committee."—(*The Master of Elibank.*)

SUPPLY [10th Allotted Day].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,500, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray

the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Customs Department."

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said the Vote under discussion included the salaries and payments made to the whole of the water guard. The water guard of the country consisted partly of what were called preventive men and preventive officers. These constituted a class of public servants who had charge of our ports; they were practically responsible for the prevention of smuggling as well as for the regulation of the import duties on various articles subject thereto, and for the collections from passengers and crews of the duty on dutiable goods brought in by them. They were also responsible for a very large number of other duties imposed upon them by Act of Parliament; they had to deal with the regulations for preventing the importation into this country of infectious disease, and they had also to carry out the Aliens Act, so far as the present Government allowed that Act to be carried into effect at all. In fact, they were a body of men upon whom the State had to look for the protection of its Customs. It would not be denied by any Member of the House who had had any opportunity of travelling abroad that these men who guarded our ports and had to do with passengers' luggage were a very superior body, and were absolutely unrivalled. They were an exceedingly respectable class, carrying out very onerous duties for very small pay. What was their position? There were altogether 700 or 800 of these preventive officers and men. The officers were divided into two classes, the upper section and the lower section, and there was a curious difficulty in the way of passing from one section to the other. If a man had served as a preventive man for an average of seventeen years, he had a chance of getting into the lower section of preventive officers, and if he remained in that lower section for twelve or thirteen years more he had a chance, if he had not already attained the age of forty-five, of passing into the upper section. But if that man were unfortunate enough to be second on the list when a vacancy arose for which he was eligible if he had not passed the age of forty-five, he might, by having to wait a few months, altogether lose his chance of passing into the upper section, and he would have to remain, consequently, in the lower section for the remainder of his service. The position of the men in the lower section who did the bulk of the work was this: after serving their country for over thirty years, they had an opportunity of rising to a wage of £150 a year. It appeared to him that this was a class of men whose case was deserving of consideration. They had to discharge onerous duties and were liable to be called out at any time of night and on Sundays as well, and it could not be said that £150 a year, after thirty years service in a responsible position, was extravagant pay. This rate of pay was fixed as far back as 1890. Eighteen years had since passed; expenses of all kinds had increased; rates, rents, and taxes had gone up, the cost of living had been enhanced, and yet their wages had remained stationary. A number of these men had special grievances. They joined the service prior to 1891, and at that time there was a natural and ordinary method of promotion open to them up to £220 per year. Yet now, fresh arrangements had been made, and they found they could not go beyond £150. Undoubtedly there were only a few of the men in that particular position, but still those few had been deprived of the reasonable expectation of attaining the £220 a year, and he thought they had unanswerable grounds for complaining that this alteration in their conditions of service should have been made to their disadvantage. Those who entered after 1891 had not, of course, the same cause for complaint. But on their behalf he had to urge upon the Committee that they were working under conditions for which there was not sufficient remuneration. These were poor men, they had not an elaborate organisation, there were not very many of them, and therefore their case was all the more deserving of sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Committee. He would like to see the pre-1891 men reinstated in the position they originally held and given a reasonable expectation of rising to the higher salary. With regard to the general conditions of the service, there was scarcely a more important body of public servants in the kingdom from the point of view of the responsibility of their position. If it were possible for any criticisms to be made against their general character or against the way in which they did their work, he admitted there might be a complete answer to their claims. But it was not possible to criticise the way in which the preventive officers and water guard of the country carried out their onerous duties, and he certainly thought that men in that position, after thirty years service, should be able to attain to something higher than £150 per year. He was not quite certain whether he would be in order in referring to a suggestion which had been thrown out more than once in favour of placing between the Treasury and different classes of public servants some sort of independent Board which would not be subject to Parliamentary pressure, and would therefore be able to deal in a far better way with these questions of scales of pay and rights of promotion.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. Member would be out of order in suggesting some kind of Committee to deal with these questions.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said the suggestion had been made a good many times in that House and on a recent occasion by an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire, that some such Board should be set up. One of his reasons for making this appeal on behalf of the preventive officers was that, as a class, they had never annoyed Members of Parliament, and they had not lobbied persistently. He did not wish to cast any reflection in that regard on any other class of men, because it should be remembered that these bodies were otherwise inarticulate. They could not, for instance, strike, they could not use the remedies which were open to the employees of railway companies, they could not disorganise the whole public service, and they were under very strict conditions with regard to discipline and with respect to their attitude towards their superior officers. Therefore, they had no way of bringing their grievances and claims under the notice of the House of Commons except through communications with Members of Parliament. Still, when once a body of men began to lobby it became a very serious question, especially if they embraced a considerable number of voters in any given constituency. Personally he did not complain of that, because on that and kindred subjects he was perfectly clear of any suggestion that he was subject to undue pressure. His majority at the time of the Conservative slump was sufficient to make him independent of any suggestion of that sort. But being convinced as he was that the water guard and the preventive officers and men were underpaid he came forward with an appeal on their behalf, an appeal which he was enabled to press all the more strongly because these men, as a body, were inarticulate and had no other means of putting forward their case. The suggestion which had been thrown out for dealing with these questions was that a Board of say five men, who were not Members of Parliament, and who were not therefore amenable to the electors, but men who had practical experience of the employment of large bodies and of the rates of pay given, could usefully be empowered to deal with such questions as wages and the system of promotion in the Civil Service without interfering in any way with what was occurring in particular departments. It was thought that a Board of that kind would relieve Members of the House from being persistently communicated with by different classes of public servants. It would also be useful in the discussion of such questions as the nationalisation of the railways or any other subjects likely to involve additions to the Civil Service. From time to time it had been suggested, mostly by those in Opposition, that a Board of this nature might well be created in order to take away from the purview of the House of Commons questions of this nature, and he certainly believed that such questions could be more efficiently dealt with in that manner than in a debate in Committee of the House on such a Motion as he had to propose that afternoon, in order to draw attention to the pay and promotion prospects of the preventive service. He begged to move a reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,400, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. William Rutherford.*)

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said he had no desire to detain the House at any length, but he wished to endorse what had fallen from the last speaker with regard to this very deserving class of public servants. A few days ago the preventive men had had an interview with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and had had an opportunity of laying their case fully before him. He rose to plead on behalf of the preventive officers that a similar privilege should be extended to them.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD pointed out that the preventive officers were granted an interview twelve months since and were met in the most courteous manner, but obtained no concessions. He understood that in the last few days the Treasury had signified its willingness, in response to the recommendation of some thirty-five or thirty-six Members of the House, to consider the possibility of giving some rather better remuneration for overtime. The men would be very grateful for any concession whatever, but this was not the main point they were asking for.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) said he agreed with much that had been said by the hon. Member for Liverpool. These preventive men had stated their case to him temperately, and there had been no "lobbying." He had a number of these hard worked men in his constituency and had had some interviews with them, and it certainly seemed to him that their case merited very careful and favourable consideration. He hoped that the Secretary to the Treasury would give them an opportunity of sending to him a deputation which could represent more fully the inequalities that existed in the ranks of the preventive service and notably in the case of the men who entered that service prior to 1891.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said the hon. Member had asked if he would be prepared to receive a deputation of preventive officers as distinct from preventive men. The officers had already had a chance of putting their case before the Treasury, but if they had anything to add he would be ready to see them at any time and to go carefully into their case. He had had the advantage of seeing a very representative deputation from the men, and had gone very carefully and thoroughly into their case. It was one which, on its merits, deserved all consideration, and during the last fortnight he had examined it from top to bottom. The hon. Gentleman who moved the reduction made the point—and it was practically his chief point—that the boatmen, as they used to be called, were in a worse position to-day in regard to pay and prospects than when they entered the service. It was necessary to examine very carefully the actual number of men now serving in the ranks of preventive men, the number of posts superior to that grade, the corresponding pay attaching to superior and subordinate posts, and to compare these facts with the position before 1891. At the present moment the superior posts consisted of one inspector, two assistant inspectors, twenty chief preventive officers, twenty-five superintendents, ninety-four upper section preventive officers, and 402 of the lower section. That was to say there were 545 posts of a superior nature and, on the other hand, 980 preventive men. There was rather more than one upper post to two subordinate positions. The work of these men was to examine the ships as opposed to the cargo. Undoubtedly the work, though it did not require much skill, entailed considerable physical strain and stress on the officers, who were exposed to all kinds of weather, and it would be most undesirable to minimise that fact in any way. The entry of men into the preventive service was by Treasury nomination without an examination attaching to it. A very large number of men were waiting to enter the service; but there was no qualifying examination beyond a simple one in the three "R's."

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington): Is one of the three "R's" rowing?

MR. HOBHOUSE thought that rowing would make a fourth "R." Before 1891 the pay of the boatmen increased from £55 by increments of £1 to £65. At the present time it began at £46 16s., and was increased by advances of £3 18s. to £86. The minimum had been somewhat lowered because the age had been lowered, but both the increments and the maximum had been increased, and, in addition to the actual pay, there were star allowances corresponding to the postman's stripe; three stars were attainable, and each one carried with it 1s. per week. Therefore, the contention that the position of the men was worse could not be maintained when the actual facts of the case were looked into. Next he would take the opportunities for promotion. Previous to 1891 only two boatmen a year were on the average promoted, which showed how restricted the opportunities were. But after 1891, under the so-called change for the worse, a large number of superior places were created, the preventive officers class was formed, and at once there was a rise in the average of promotion to twenty-nine a year, and that average chance of promotion had increased until at the present moment there were no less than thirty-seven annual promotions from the rank of preventive man to preventive officer or a higher class. Whereas the boatman's chances of rising were formerly two a year, they were now greater, and he could go up to a superintendent, chief officer, or even an inspector. So that the number of opportunities which now existed was greater, and the scale of pay much higher, while the number of superior posts had increased out of all proportion to his former opportunities of rising. He hoped the Committee would see that there really had been a very considerable increase in the amount of pay for this class of men and that the opportunities for promotion had been enormously increased. There was only one other point he need dwell upon, and that was the question of overtime. He had looked carefully into the question, and he was not altogether satisfied that the present system was satisfactory. He could not make any definite promise, as it was only within the last few days that the matter had been brought to his attention, but it was a question upon which he thought there was something to be said, and although something had been done by his predecessor in the matter of Sunday pay, and a very proper concession made on that point, he thought further concessions might be made on the question of overtime, and he would look into the matter. With regard to the suggestion of an independent tribunal to consider wages, that raised a very large question indeed, and he could hold out no hopes that the Government would deal with it. He wondered whether the hon. Gentleman had really considered what the position of that House was in the matter of responsibility. His suggestion was in effect that an outside Committee, which would remove the possibilities of the lobbying of Members, should be appointed with the right to settle all questions of the pay of Civil servants. But so carefully did that House safeguard public expenditure that it was not possible for a private Member to move an increase of expenditure; it was expressly reserved to the Government to propose what the expenditure of the country should be. To his mind it was unthinkable that the House of Commons should part with a safeguard of that sort, and if there was a good deal of pressure put upon Members of the House, surely there was responsibility also resting on them to refuse and reject any such pressure. When they agreed that such pressure would mean expenditure which could not otherwise be justified, it would be shirking a part of their duties if they tried to hand over to some outside tribunal the responsibility which now rested, and ought to continue to rest, upon them. Something had been said about the position of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire on this question, and he had refreshed his memory on that point by looking up the answer which the right hon. Gentleman made to the hon. Member for North Camberwell. The Question was as to whether some permanent body or Commission to deal with Civil servants' wages should be appointed. That must have been about the middle of July, 1905, just before the end of that session, and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire, said that if the suggestion was generally approved a Committee of that House (but not of persons outside), might be appointed to lay down the principles upon which the wages of employees of the State should be fixed. That was a very different position indeed.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD: The reference was made on the Post Office Vote.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said that that was an answer to a Question and not a reply on the spur of the moment. He had recently had some experience of a Parliamentary Committee discussing the subject of the pay of Civil servants, and notwithstanding the care and labour and attention which were given to the consideration of the subject, the decisions of that Committee were not met with general approval by the members of the Civil Service into whose grievances they had inquired, and the experience gained, he ventured to think, would probably mean that no other Member of Parliament would desire to serve on any similar Committee.

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD said he was sure the Committee was obliged to the Financial Secretary for the clear statement he had made, but he thought he was rather hard on his hon. friend behind him as to the independent tribunal. It was not the fault of his hon. friend; he had caught the disease from the other side of the House. Every Bill the Government had brought in had involved the transfer of important duties to various Boards or Commissions. As regarded the preventive boatmen, he was at the Treasury at the time the last revision was made, and he thought he was right in saying that the age of the men was from twenty-one to twenty-five years. It was then represented to the Treasury that the wages given were not sufficient or adequate for a man of twenty-one; it was also represented that for that wage they would not get good men, and that it would be far better to take men of seventeen or eighteen and give them a lower wage, and then train them up to better appointments. That was done, and he believed the effect had been very good. He could confirm what the Financial Secretary had said as to the extremely disagreeable duties which those men had to perform. It really consisted in the searching of ships, not of the cargoes, and when he was at the Treasury he found that the men had to get into the most extraordinary holes and corners, and that the ingenuity of the merchant seamen in concealing contraband was marvellous. The tales he was told by some of the Customs boatmen were really worthy of some of the sixpenny magazines. He also thought he was right in saying that the preventive boatmen had to be competent in rowing, otherwise in rough weather their duties would give rise to great danger. They were told that the men's wages started, roughly, at £45, and gradually rose by increments to £86. He would like to know whether that increment was given to the ordinary preventive man, or did it include any rise he might have by starts or by promotion to a higher rank? In other words, was the £86 open to a preventive man, or must he be an officer?

Mr. HOBHOUSE said the scale was quite clear. It began with 18s. a week, and rose by 1s. 6d. to a maximum of 23s. per week, and in addition whatever number of stars he might earn.

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD said he took it that this corps was self-contained. He meant that they could not take an inspector from outside and put him in the service, but that it must be a gradual and steady rise by promotion. He thought the alteration made two years ago by the late Government was a very satisfactory one.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he did not hear the whole of the speech of his hon. friend the Member for Liverpool, but he gathered that what he proposed was that there should be some sort of tribunal to whom questions of pay should be referred. He quite agreed with him when he said that this was a serious and important question and one which entailed a considerable amount of disagreeable duty upon Members of Parliament. He had heard from both sides of the House—from the late Sir William Harcourt and Lord St. Aldwyn—many speeches with the same refrain, that that constant pressure of Civil servants on Members of Parliament must stop. He thought the Financial Secretary was a little hard on his hon. friend when he said that he could not possibly consider any such proposal. He did not hear what the proposal was, and therefore he must safeguard himself in supporting it. He could see the difficulties which he thought the Financial Secretary had put very clearly, and he would be strongly against any outside tribunal, but he thought the chief men in the Treasury and the various Government Departments might form a small tribunal to whom any question of an increase of wages might be referred, for final revision by the Treasury, and that the House might come to an understanding that on all sides Members would pay no attention whatever to any pressure put upon them for rises in salary. He did not know whether the preventive boatmen ought to have a rise or not. When he first came to Parliament his life was a misery to him because he was supposed to be a friend of the then Parliamentary Secretary, who had the nomination of these men. This was an employment which a large number of men were desirous of entering, and the moment they were in they required a rise in their salary; but they had no business to go in if they were not satisfied with the wages they were to receive. To get into a Department and then to say they were dissatisfied was not to his mind the way to advance the efficiency of either the Civil service or any other administration. He quite agreed with the statement of the hon. Gentleman about the result of the Post Office Committee. Fortunately, he was not on that Committee, and he was very glad of it, and he sympathised very heartily with all those hon. Members who performed that disagreeable duty, for which they had received no thanks at all; indeed, one was inundated with complaints about the way in which the Committee performed their duties. There was one point which he thought had been overlooked, and that was that these men appeared to have very liberal pensions after a short period of service. On page 16 he found a large number of men pensioned. The first man was forty-one years old and had only had nineteen years of service, and he got a pension. The next was fifty-one, with a pension; then forty, with only fifteen years service, with a pension. There was another man aged fifty-one and another fifty-five, and on page seventeen one of forty-six and another of thirty-eight, all in receipt of pensions. One must remember that if a man was to be able to receive a pension at as early an age as thirty-eight——

MR. HOBHOUSE: All those officers who have been retired so early have been retired on account of bad health.

SIR F. BANBURY said that when they considered the wages that were being paid to these men they must bear in mind that they were eligible if they became ill to receive a pension at an early age. He thought that was important. If a man entered the service at twenty-three or twenty-four and knew that if he became ill as early as thirty-eight or forty years of age, he could receive a pension, that was deferred pay, and should be considered in arriving at the sum which ought to be given. He would be much obliged if his hon. friend would tell him whether he had moved the reduction of the Vote on the ground that some scheme ought to have been devised which should prevent that kind of pressure being put on Members of Parliament, because if so, he would vote with him; but if it was that there should be an increase in the wages of these men, as he believed the Treasury was the better judge of that matter, he should vote against him.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton) referred to what had fallen from the Financial Secretary in regard to the tribunal suggested by his hon. friend. He thought the hon. Gentleman when he quoted the view of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire must have overlooked the fact that since that answer was given a very important statement had been made by the right hon. Gentleman on the Post Office Vote last year, when he declared to the House that he thought the time had come when some sort of tribunal or conciliation board should be set up. Those who had studied the subject must be aware that it was never suggested that that conciliation board should in any sense interfere with the responsibility of that House. On the contrary, it was to proceed somewhat on the same lines as the Railway Conciliation Boards, and its findings would come before the Minister, who would present his decision upon that tribunal's decision for the consideration of Parliament. He agreed that they could not go on in the Civil Service as they were now. The whole of the Civil Service was seething with discontent, and any person who had given a moment's thought to the subject must be aware that in a great measure that discontent was well founded. He, therefore, hoped that the very decided "No" which the Secretary to the Treasury had given to the suggestion of his hon. friend would be reconsidered, more especially as it was only last year that the late Prime Minister, in reply to a Question which he put to him, certainly said he could hold out no hope of such a tribunal straight away, but used language which unquestionably was sympathetic to the idea. Further than that, he would remind the hon. Gentleman that when the present Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department was sitting on those benches, he thought in 1904, he himself made a suggestion that some tribunal should be created to cope with these matters, and his view was supported by several Members of the present Government. Surely, now they had travelled into a new century, the time had come to overhaul the whole of the Civil Service organisation. All of them knew that discussion on the grievances of the various classes, and particularly of the smaller classes, the minor Civil servants, was a perfunctory discussion, and not very effective on the Minister in charge. He had, with the Secretary to the Treasury, the fortune or the misfortune to serve on the Post Office Committee, and although he joined with him in saying they did the best they could under the circumstances, he was satisfied in his own mind that a Committee of that House was by no means the best, if it was not the worst, form of tribunal to which they should entrust those very intricate and delicate matters of office organisation, all of which should be determined with promptitude by broad common-sense views, founded upon strict justice. He hoped, therefore, that his hon. friend would proceed to a division, so that they might certify by their vote that the time had come when not only should that particular class receive further benefits, but the Government should, during the next year, consider very carefully what form of tribunal they could recommend for the acceptance of the House.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) said there was no doubt that Members were in some danger from the pressure that was put upon them by Civil servants, but as far as his experience went these people were very moderate. In Salford he had some of these men as his constituents, and they had spoken to him about their conditions of labour and their wages. He was not entirely satisfied that an answer had been given to one point by his hon. friend. All those preventive officers who came to him said that holders of that position formerly had their duty performed by examining officers at a higher rate of pay, but there was a reorganisation of the Department, when these officers were cut off from admission to that class and to the desirable positions to which it led, and the present staff of preventive officers was created. The men claimed that the importance and the value of their services had largely increased since that time, 1891, and that their remuneration had been considerably reduced, and they claimed that that was a positive breach of trust. Neither in an individual capacity nor as a Member of the House of Commons did he like to be charged with a breach of trust, and he would like the hon. Gentleman to meet that direct point. He understood that the hon. Gentleman was prepared to receive representations or a delegation from these men, and perhaps when he saw them he would be able to convince them that the present Government and the former Government had not committed any breach of trust.

*Mr. SUMMERBELL said that they had had an intimation from their friends on the Opposition side that they were going to take a vote in order to express their view that some Committee should be set up and so put a stop to the lobbying of Members. He was in full sympathy with both men and officers with regard to their grievances and was prepared to support them, but if it was going to be a vote in order that some Committee might be set up to get those men out of the way and prevent them having an opportunity of appealing to Members of that House, he would be against any such attempt. He thought the men would not want to be smothered in any such fashion.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said the point upon which he moved the reduction of the Vote, and upon which they intended to proceed to a division, was simply that they had put forward the case of a body of public servants who, since 1891, had had largely increased and more onerous duties to perform under various Acts of Parliament. Their pay had not been increased and a considerable portion of their prospective promotion had been taken away, in addition to which their rent, rates, and other outgoings had considerably increased; and if they were to understand from the Treasury that they could not hold out to that body of public servants any prospect of their case being considered, either for an increase of pay or for better promotion, and that there was equally no prospect of the matter being considered by an independent tribunal, then on behalf of that body of men he had no option but to proceed to a division.

Sir F. BANBURY asked if there was any foundation for the charge of a breach of faith.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he hoped he had made it quite clear to the Committee that there was no justification of any sort or kind for that charge. Unquestionably the staff was divided in 1891. The boatmen were cut off from the examining staff of officers, but a fresh class of officers was made for the express purpose of giving them promotion, and the number of such superior offices which was allotted to them in 1891 was 310, and with certain other posts 329, while at the present moment those posts numbered 545, an increase of very nearly 100 per cent. on the amount of promotion open to them in 1891. The reason for separating them from the examining staff in 1891 was that the work previously done by the examining staff was changed; the subordinate part of the examining work was given to clerks, and the duties were divided. What he wanted to insist upon was that, from the information he had—and he had taken the trouble to search into the matter—there had been really no right of promotion, and hardly any expectation. So small was the promotion that only two per annum were promoted on the average. The number of promotions in the class to which reference had been made—the class had diminished from 1,100 to 908—had risen from two per annum by gift to an average of thirty-seven per annum by right.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 14; Noes, 112. (Division List No. 115.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Fell, Arthur
Grayson, Albert Victor
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rendall, Athelstan
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Watson Rutherford and Mr. Claude Hay.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Bell, Richard
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brigg, John
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cleland, J. W.

Clough, William
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Crooks, William
Dalmeny, Lord
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H.(St.Pancras, N.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Everett, R. Lacey
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Laidlaw, Robert
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Marnham, F. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murray, Capt. Hn. A.C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid.
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robertson, Sir G Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Shackleton, David James
Sherwell, Arthur James
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W C.
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Wardle, George J.
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Master of Elibank and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

Original Question again proposed.

*MR. CLAUDE HAY, in moving to reduce the Vote by £500, said he desired to call attention to the position of the senior or old class of abstractors, or assistant clerks, in the Customs, London. There were about forty men of this class in the Customs House, some half-dozen being in the Long room, and the remainder in the statistical office. This matter had been very often put before the Treasury, particularly since the present Government came into office. Many Members had doubtless received a communication from these clerks, whose case was a very hard one. On the several occasions on which representations had been made to the Treasury very conflicting answers had been given, and the position of these officials had not been improved in any sense. The clerks were employed upon responsible duties which used to be performed by examining officers with higher salaries and assured prospects of promotion. The duties of these clerks or abstractors were connected with the revenue, and they were called upon to enter into a bond. Therefore, it could not be supported that they were Civil servants merely engaged in what was more or less statistical work. Those in the statistical office were engaged upon the monthly returns known as the Board of Trade Returns, and their duties were similar to, or at any rate no less responsible than, those of the port clerks and examining officers employed in other branches of the Department. These Civil servants had no practical channel opened for promotion. This seemed unduly hard when they considered the assiduous service of many of them to the State for something like thirty years. Nearly all these clerks had reached the maximum, and to ask them to continue ten or fifteen years in the service without any hope of improvement either in salary or in channels of promotion must, human nature being what it was, have a depressing influence upon the manner in which they performed their duties, and was not calculated to add to efficiency. These men from time to time had approached the Board of Customs, and had been led to believe that there would be some improvement in their position.

Hopes were held out to them that vacancies would be offered them as liberally as they were offered to second division clerks, but in only two instances had this been done, and the hardship was all the greater when they considered that during that period there had been between 100 and 200 vacancies in port clerkships. If these men had done their work well, and discharged their duties faithfully and efficiently, surely it was only fair that they should have something more than two chances when there were 100 or 200 vacancies available for them to be selected for. In 1901 the view of the Treasury was expressed by a Minute, which was the best proof that the work of these men and their character were highly thought of by the Department, for the Treasury on behalf of the Board of Customs stated that they had been pleased to accept in principle the proposal of the Customs Board occasionally to offer a vacancy in the lower section of second class clerks to assistant clerks of exceptional merit. Yet in April, 1906, in reply to a memorial for promotion to port clerkships the men were informed that—

> "The Board are of opinion that they do not appear to fulfil the conditions which are required to justify the Board in recommending an assistant clerk for promotion to a port clerkship."

He would like the Secretary to the Treasury to explain why they arrived at the opinion that men of good character and ability, who had for years been performing responsible duties precisely similar to those of port clerks, did not appear to fufil the necessary conditions. In November, 1906, a memorial was presented by these men, and the Board in reply to them stated—

> "Their Lordships agree with the Board that it is impracticable to treat the two sections of assistant clerks in the Statistical Office—the older statistical abstractors and the tabulators, who signed the petition—separately for the purpose of promotion; that from the Departmental point of view the two must form one body, and other things being equal, the senior men cannot be ignored."

But they had been ignored. That was the whole point of their grievance. In face of this declaration what had occurred? The Board of Customs had recently nominated six tabulators or new clerks for promotion to port clerkships and had altogether ignored the claims of the men whose case he had laid before the Committee, and the effect of thus ignoring them was that junior men with many years less service and experience received consideration, while the seniors who applied for such promotion, and were told that their claims would be considered first, were now in a hopeless position. It would be noticed that while the Board of Customs told the men they did not appear to fulfil the conditions which were required for promotion, no such statement was made respecting the men in the Statistical Office. Perhaps the Secretary to the Treasury would explain why that was so. They must surely be held to fulfil the necessary conditions if they "could not be ignored," in the words of the Treasury. Why then, had they been ignored in this extraordinary way, and all hope of further advancement denied them, whilst their juniors were given promotion? Surely the State was not observing the rule which the House of Commons had laid down of being a model employer. It was committing a gross and utterly indefensible injustice. He did not wish to attack this Government more than the last. There had been some sinister influence at work for some years past in regard to these officers and similar grades in other branches of the Civil Service. He had had hopes that when new men came to the head of affairs, new brooms would sweep clean. He believed, though he had had no direct contact with any of the gentlemen themselves, that there had been soft words from the Treasury; but so far nothing tangible had resulted. What he advanced now was not a matter involving huge sums of money, but it involved the interests of a few Civil servants—of men very worthy of further promotion and further consideration. They had served long, and done important work, and had attained an age when they had heavy family and other expenses, and surely those who had served the State well for years should be the first to receive sympathetic and handsome treatment from the House of Commons. He, therefore, in order to emphasise the urgency of the claims of these men and to show that they had the sympathy of Members, moved this reduction.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £620,000, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Claude Hay.*)

Mr. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness) said he desired to draw attention to the position of the outdoor men. He understood that an effort had been made to draft a new scale of conditions and pay, but the negotiations had fallen through owing to a lack of unanimity amongst the men composing the service. He understood that there were to be no examinations for promotion for the next two years, and that there could only be six vacancies per annum during the next seven years, and, inasmuch as no less than 830 Members of the Customs outdoor department were concerned, it was obvious that there was very little prospect of covering such a large number of men. He understood that what these men asked for was that a scheme based upon the same lines as that granted to the second division clerks on 1st April last should be extended to the Customs outdoor department, and he would like to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he could give any hope that such a scheme might be brought into existence. These men certainly deserved some consideration, and inasmuch as the prospects were by no means hopeful as far as they were concerned, he hoped he would have an answer which would give them some encouragement.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) said he remembered that when the question of the outdoor men was raised last year their principal grievance was that they were very badly treated in the way of promotion. There were 1,800 outdoor men and only about 300 clerks, but nearly all the vacancies went to the clerks, and not to the outdoor men. Last year the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Vote said he would look into the matter and treat it with a certain amount of sympathy. He asked whether it had been looked into and whether there was any change contemplated in the proportion of the outdoor men who could get promotion or whether nothing was to be done. It was rather hard on the men, because they were all of considerable ability and experience and had just as much right as the clerks to these higher appointments or collectorships.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said the hon. Member for Hoxton had championed the cause of what were called the old class of abstractors. These abstractors were common to the whole of the Civil Service, and were not confined to the Customs Department. They entered the Service as temporary copyists, were paid so much an hour, and were liable to dismissal at practically a moment's notice. They came in as a purely temporary staff to tide over temporary difficulties, and like all casual labour of that sort they were liable to be dismissed. What was their position at the present moment? Were they still liable to dismissal? Were they still to be called casual labourers? Neither of these two conditions was now applicable and their position had, therefore, enormously improved. The casual employment had been converted into permanent employment, with a salary rising from £80 to £150. They had no claim to pension in respect of their temporary service, but they had been allowed to count half of their temporary service towards pension. He thought the charge of the hon. Gentleman in the case of the old abstractors had not been made out. The hon. Gentleman had raised the further point that they had not received their share of promotion. The answer to that was very simple. Everyone of the old abstractors who could be promoted had been promoted, and there only remained a comparatively small number who really were not worthy of promotion.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY said he had called attention to the Treasury Minute of 1906, where it was stated that those men whom the hon. Gentleman had described as not fit for promotion could not be separated in any way from the new class.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he understood that every one of the abstractors it was possible to promote had been promoted. That was the information which he had received from the Department. As to the other point raised with respect to the men known as the landing staff of the outdoor service of Customs he said that the staff consisted practically, if not entirely, of first and second class examining officers, and of surveyors and inspectors. He did not wish to go into a long explanation of what had led up to the present difficulties. There was undoubtedly at the present moment great difficulty in the way of promotion of the upper section of the second class of examining officers. This class of men, numbering about 400, entered the service between 1876 and 1880, at a time when the Service was increased, and the conditions were changed. The position at the present moment was this. The number of promotions per annum likely to accrue in the immediate future had come down to about eight or ten, and that would continue for six or seven years, perhaps even longer. He thought the hon. Member would agree with him that if the slow promotions at the present moment were to be followed by rapid promotions, it would not make for the good of the service. There ought to be—he wished there were—some method by which promotion should be made to go equitably and equally during each successive year. The staff of the Customs and that of the Inland Revenue were exceedingly liable to fluctuations of this sort because of the changes brought about by the financial Bills. The way in which the revenue was collected and also the subjects on which it was charged entailed a fluctuating amount of duty in both departments. It was impossible, therefore, to regulate promotion in the Customs Department with the regularity which everybody agreed was desirable, more particularly in the case of those officers suffering from slowness of promotion by reason of the doing away with what was known as the double system of promotion shortly after they entered the service. Up to that time it had been partly by selection and partly by seniority, but the Goschen Minute made the whole of the promotions depend upon seniority, and of course the young men who came into the service had their chance of promotion done away with until the whole of the senior officers had been cleared off the list above them. The change was made for satisfactory reasons at the time, but it had led to the state of affairs existing at the present moment. He thought that that differentiated those clerks from others who had suffered from the ordinary fluctuations in promotion. There was no doubt that their case required careful consideration. It was quite true that a scheme of promotion had been approved by the Customs for examining officers and assistant clerks, and it looked at one time as if the system could have been agreed upon by the various parties concerned. But owing to certain circumstances a great number of the Customs officers fell away from the scheme. Practically one-half of the new servants fell away from the scheme, and the matter required further consideration. Undoubtedly the question was complicated also by the fact that there was going to be a change in the Customs and Inland Revenue Departments which must mean something like an amalgamation of the two staffs. Therefore, the whole of this question must rest until that amalgamation took place. When it took place the difficulties to which he had alluded, and on account of which these officers were undoubtedly suffering, would be carefully considered, and he hoped some remedy would be found for their case. He did not think he could at this time profitably enlarge on the subject. He intended to set before the Committee a scheme which would render more hopeful the claims of that deserving class. With regard to the question of the promotion of collectors, he understood that the promise given by his predecessor had been dealt with, and that there had been promotions.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,523,600, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Inland Revenue Department."

*Mr. SNOWDEN (Blackburn) said he wanted to call attention to one or two matters in regard to administration and conditions of service in connection with the Inland Revenue Department. For a considerable time there had been great discontent among the staff of the Excise outdoor department in regard to their position and scale of salaries. Instead of getting less, the discontent had continued to grow, and within the last few years it had assumed very considerable, and from many points of view most disquieting, proportions. Some three years ago Excise Associations were formed in all parts of the country for the purpose of furthering the agitation, and practically the whole of the outside Excise staff was now associated. Of course, it might be said that the existence of an agitation was not in itself proof of the reasonableness of the foundation of the agitation. He was quite prepared to admit that, but he assured the members of the Committee that he would not that afternoon take up this question if he did not feel that the Excise outdoor staff had a case which was worthy of their consideration. It was something like forty years since an independent inquiry was made into the conditions of the Excise Department. About twenty years ago the Ridley Commission inquired into Civil Service grievances generally, and they reported in regard to many departments of the Civil Service. But it was very important to note that they reported that the Excise work was so technical that it was impossible for a Commission with general powers to come to a conclusion in the matter. The Committee in their Report said—

> "We think that the work is not too highly paid, especially when it is remembered that a great deal of it is performed under circumstances admitting of great temptation to dishonesty."

The present maximum salary was fixed eighteen years ago. He might mention that at the time the increases were given eighteen years ago the Board of Inland Revenue took away £10,000 which the Excise had received annually up to 1890 in connection with the work of collecting the Agricultural Returns. The officers had continued to do that work, but after 1890 the extra remuneration was stopped. What was the present position of the Excise staff, and did it entitle them to a reconsideration of the scale of salaries? Every officer of Excise entered as an assistant began at a salary of £50 a year, and he was employed during his period of assistancy in taking charge of stations. He rose by £5 a year to £80, and when he was actively employed he was paid in addition to his fixed salary the sum of 2s. a day. He was given to understand that in the last few years there had been more regular employment. When he was in the service he was unemployed one year for 186 days, and during that time he had to endeavour to subsist on the munificent salary of 19s. per week. The assistants were doing responsible work. If an assistant was fortunate, at the end of six years he was raised to the second class, and then his salary advanced by increments to £160 a year. By the time he reached that figure he would have something like thirteen or fourteen years service, and then he was promoted to a first-class station. In that class his salary began at £180, and went up to £250. It would require something approaching thirty years service before he could reach that maximum. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would not dispute the statement that the duties of the officers of Excise were very responsible indeed. The outdoor Excise staff were responsible for a revenue of £30,000,000 a year. Since 1890, when the last increase in salaries was granted, there had been a considerable addition to the work of the outdoor Excise. He found that in the last eighteen years the average amount of revenue for which a supervisor was responsible had increased by £30,000 a year, and the amount of revenue for which each officer was responsible had increased by £5,000 a year. These officers were doing their work very largely without supervision. A supervisor of Inland Revenue had something like half a dozen officers under his supervision, but in a town or in a country district it was quite impossible for a supervisor to visit the stations more than twice a week. The operations of the Excise were such that practically as soon as a charge had been made all possibility of checking the correctness of the charge was gone. Therefore, the responsibility of the officers was very great. Eighteen years ago the cost of collection represented 3·1 per cent. of the revenue collected, and now it was just over 2 per cent. All the concessions asked for by the officers of Excise would, if granted, add to the cost of collection only one-sixth per cent. What were the demands of the outdoor staff? They did not make demands; they only made suggestions. He was not there on behalf of this class to ask for an increase in their maximum salary. What he asked was that a Committee should be appointed to investigate the reasonableness of the suggestions they put forward. They had hitherto proceeded in the most constitutional manner. They had repeatedly approached the Board of Inland Revenue, and through the Board, the Treasury. The maximum salary was now £250 after something like thirty years service. They suggested that the maximum should be raised to £300, and they based the reasonableness of that suggestion on a comparison with the maximum of the second division clerks. An outdoor officer of Excise was doing his work practically without supervision; a second division clerk was doing his work under the direct supervision of his superior officer, and yet the latter could reach the maximum salary of £300. Supposing that were granted, it did not mean that for an equal number of years service the salary of the Excise officer would be equal to the salary of a second division clerk. As a matter of fact, it would not. The outcome of the Ridley Commission was very fortunate for the second division class clerk, but, as he had pointed out, the Commission declined to recommend anything in regard to the outdoor officers of Excise on account of the highly technical nature of their work. A much closer parallel was to be found in the case of the inquiry into the Customs outdoor service in 1891, when Mr. Goschen was at the Treasury. Mr. Goschen conceded a demand for an inquiry, and the result was that considerable improvement was made in the scale of pay in that service. They had the strange anomaly at the present time that a Customs officer doing work exactly the same was paid £340 a year, while the first class Excise officer received £250. In the Customs there was more constant supervision than was possible in the Excise. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised to support such an inquiry as was now asked, and eleven Members of the Government had given similar pledges just before the Government came into office. The right hon. Gentleman who was now in the position of Secretary of State for War presided at a meeting of Excise officers, and he confessed that they had a *prima facie* case for inquiry into their alleged grievances. The reply might be given that the Customs and the Inland Revenue Departments were to be put into the melting pot, and that it would be impossible at present to set up such a Committee as that now asked for. For the time being he would be satisfied with an assurance from the Financial Secretary to the Treasury or the Chancellor of the Exchequer that when the amalgamation had taken place there would be an inquiry into the grievances of the Excise officers. On several occasions during the last two months reference had been made to the political disabilities of Civil servants. Although the instructions issued to officers of the Inland Revenue prohibited them from being members of political associations, he supposed it was well known that that was a regulation more honoured in the breach than the observance. As a matter of fact the majority of the men in Somerset House were members of political organisations in spite of the paragraph in the general instructions. He did not attempt to excuse the conduct of the officer of Excise at Guildford. It was, in his opinion, indiscreet; and it would not be for the good of the service if the officers were allowed to take an active part in political contests in the localities in which they were stationed. But apart from that, the regulation which prohibited officers from being members of a political organisation should be repealed. As a matter of fact he thought there was no legal justification for it. The Postmaster-General on 20th February last quoted the opinion given by Mr. Gladstone when First Lord of the Treasury, in 1893, as follows—

> "The only restriction by the custom of the public service on persons employed is that persons in the permanent employment of the State shall not take an active part in political contests, and it is not intended in future that any other restricted rule should be imposed (in the Post Office)."

There was nothing in that rule to prevent members of the Civil Service from being members of a political organisation, although they could not take part in ordinary political warfare. Therefore what he was asking for did not go nearly so far as what Mr. Gladstone said in 1893 was the recognised rule of the Civil Service. Might he also point out the impracticability of preventing officers of the Inland Revenue from being a member of a political organisation, inasmuch as they could be and were often members of town councils and school boards; and it was practically impossible to get elected to these bodies except through the agency of some political organisation. He knew he expressed the sentiments of the vast majority of members of the service when he said that they did not desire that liberty should be given to engage in their own station in active partisan party or political warfare; but he did not think that a similar restriction ought to apply to Excise officers away from where their own work was carried on. And if the regulation was so amended that they might fairly come in as private members of political organisations, he believed that for the time being it would give satisfaction. He pressed for a reconsideration of the maximum scale of salaries. It might be said by the hon. Gentleman who would reply on behalf of the Department that some concessions had been made since the present Government came into office. Shortly after the late Chancellor of the Exchequer came into office he met a deputation of first class officers who had passed the examination as assistant supervisors and were waiting for permanent appointments as supervisors. What the Chancellor of the Exchequer did was to raise the salary of these men from £265 to £280. These assistant supervisors were doing all the responsible work of permanent supervisors; they were men of more than twenty years service, who had a thorough technical knowledge of the work, and on a salary of £280 they had to maintain practically two homes, for it was quite impossible to take their families with them on temporary employment. At the time the change was made it was stated that no further increase of salary was to take effect until twelve months after they had been appointed to a new station. To assistants of Excise a further concession was given when they were on private leave or sick leave; but that did not amount to an average of more than £2 a year. Recognising the widespread and deep-rooted agitation which had been going on in the outdoor Excise department for many years, he thought he would carry with him every Member of the Committee in his moderate demand—especially when it was considered that such an important Department as the Excise drew in something like thirty millions of revenue to the State. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would give a favourable consideration to the points he had raised.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs) said that he should join the hon. Member in all that he had said as to the character and capacity of the members of this branch of the Civil Service. He agreed that they had shown themselves an exceptionally able and trustworthy body of men. Their duties were exceedingly responsible and difficult and very often very delicate; but he believed that they discharged them in a way that gave general satisfaction. Their duties, under sometimes most trying conditions, must often appear to be provocative, and this might lead to unpleasantnesses; but he thought they discharged them in a way which had won the confidence of the public. He would add that he agreed with the hon. Member that no suggestion had ever been made of even a suspicion of bribery and corruption or influence of that nature, and that, he thought, was very important when they came to consider the general character of the Civil Service of the country, especially at a time when every proposal that came before Parliament was rather in the direction of increasing their responsibilities and powers. When fresh powers and responsibilities were imposed on a body of men in the public service, it was specially important that those officials should give confidence to their fellow citizens. He was not going to deal with the first part of the observations of the hon. Member as to salaries of the men in the Excise. That he would leave to his hon. friend and colleague. He got up rather to direct himself to the criticism of the hon. Member as to certain action of the Inland Revenue in reference to the intervention of Excise officers in political controversy. He believed that the hon. Member did not put forward a claim that these Civil servants should have absolute freedom to take part in active political warfare. He understood that the hon. Member agreed that that would be quite impossible. But the case on which the hon. Member based his criticism was a case of that kind. The hon. Member was referring to the case of an Inland Revenue officer at Guildford who was an active member of a political party—he did not think it mattered for a moment of what political party. In that capacity the Inland Revenue officer took the chair and made speeches at public meetings convened for political purposes. He thought that, on the whole, the hon. Member would agree that that was quite incompatible with his position as a Revenue officer. Therefore, it would not be necessary for him to discuss that point. The officer's attention was called to the matter and to the regulation of the Department bearing upon it; but the man thought it consistent with his position to challenge the action of the Department and to claim actual freedom. There was only one thing to be done in the circumstances, and that was to remove him to another sphere of activity. The disapprobation of the Board of Inland Revenue was so expressed upon conduct of that kind.

*MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): He was sent to Glasgow as a punishment, was he not?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I do not say that that might not be a fairly adequate punishment for his offence. There never was a time when it was more important that this regulation should be enforced and rather rigidly enforced. The hon. Member said that a good many officers of the Inland Revenue were members of political associations; but he did not think that it was always the case that members of political associations took an active part in party politics. That might be so, but he wanted the hon. Gentleman to realise what the position of an Excise officer would be. Let him consider what it meant to hand over a sum of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 to be dispensed by the Excise officers throughout the whole of the country. It was a gigantic piece of patronage. They would be called upon to examine the credentials of applicants, to sift claims, to see that they came under the qualifications for pensions and that they were not subject to the disqualifications set out in the Bill. It was of the utmost importance that officers charged with such duties should be free not only from political bias, but from any suspicion of political bias. Let them assume an Excise officer to be a member of a Liberal Association. Every old person approaching the age of seventy would know that he would have to submit his qualification for pension to a man who was a political partisan, and had labelled himself as a political partisan by becoming a member of a political organisation. Was that a desirable state of things? In his opinion it would be a great mistake on the part of the Excise officers themselves, because, although they might be quite free from even the taint of political bias, there would always be a suspicion, whenever they ruled out a person who happened to belong to another political party, that they had done it from political motives. Such a suspicion would vitiate the whole system. There would not be that confidence which it was essential that the public should feel in the dispensation of patronage of that kind. He did not think that up to the present time any body of public servants had been freer from political bias than the Civil Service of this country. There were other countries where it was fully recognised that Civil Service appointments were rewards for political service. The moment the party to which an officer belonged was out of office he disappeared, and a member of another political party was put in his place. There were countries where the Civil Service was used for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear on the electors. This country had been absolutely free from any suspicion of that kind up to the present, and it was of paramount importance that that happy state of things should be maintained. Especially when the power and, above all, the patronage of officers was being increased was it desirable that they should be able to exercise that power and dispense that patronage free from any doubt, anxiety, or suspicion in the mind of anybody. That would be impossible unless this regulation were strictly enforced.

MR. SNOWDEN: It never has been enforced.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that in that case it was quite time that it should be. His impression was that this regulation was put into strict operation throughout the country so far as the Customs was concerned. It was quite possible that members of the Excise had been nominally members of a political association, but had not taken any part in the proceedings of such association, but he was certain that it was now of the greatest importance, when £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 was to be handed over to them to be distributed under conditions of which they and they only were to be largely the judges, that they should know that this regulation would be rigorously enforced in the future, whatever had been done in the past. In their own interest it was better to err on the side of rigor than on the side of slackness. He understood that the hon. Member did not now challenge the action of the Government in any particular case, so that he was discussing the subject in the abstract. If any particular case was brought before him, he would be happy to discuss it with the hon. Member; but his view generally was that it was very important that the officers of Excise should keep clear of anything in the nature of political controversy.

MR. SNOWDEN asked whether they might not be members of organisations outside their own working area.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had not considered that point, but he did not see how they could discriminate. He thought it would be rather dangerous to try to do so. The man who was at the expense of travelling to and attending the meetings of a central political organisation was generally one of the strongest partisans, and an Excise officer who, while not attending the branch of which he was a member, attended the conferences at the Central Association must be a strong partisan indeed. He did not think that such political partisanship was to be encouraged in a body of men whose business it was, in his view, to treat their duties almost as judicial. They should regard themselves as judges, because that was what they really would be. They would be judges of questions of vital importance to 500,000 persons in this country. They would be judges as to whether those persons were to have comfort and sustenance for the rest of their lives. In his view they would exercise the most important judicial function that could be placed upon anyone—a function infinitely more important than the functions of a County Court Judge. When they were dispensing patronage of this kind it was important that they should be above suspicion of political bias and for these reasons he could not respond to the appeal of the hon. Member.

SIR F. BANBURY said he rose to ask a question in the interests of economy. He wished to know why £1,600 more had been put down in the estimates this year for the increase in the number of special Commissioners by two. He found that the item had increased from £2,500 to £4,100 and he would like to know why it had been thought necessary to create these two extra special Commissioners of income-tax. Was it due to differentiation? He pointed out that a very large sum of money was voted annually for the Civil Services, that it had to be paid by the tax-payers, and that a little economy was sometimes advisable however generously the Treasury might feel towards the salaries which ought to be paid to the servants of the State.

MR. CLAUDE HAY supported the appeal made by the hon. Member for Blackburn. The time had certainly arrived when an independent inquiry was necessary. The matter had been repeatedly brought to the attention of the House in recent years and it should now be dealt with.

MR. MCCALLUM (Paisley) said he heartily approved all that had been said by the hon. Member for Blackburn. The time had certainly come when there should be a careful and independent inquiry into the whole situation of the Revenue Officers. The hon. Member had put forward a very strong case in a very moderate way, and he hoped the Government would accede to his appeal.

MR. WATT expressed his sympathy with the position taken up by the hon. Member for Blackburn, and hoped that the Secretary to the Treasury would see his way to granting the Parliamentary inquiry asked for. The whole case of these outdoor Excisemen had been put to the Committee by the hon. Member for Blackburn, and the only point which he (Mr. Watt) desired to emphasise was that the salaries of these men had not been overlooked or inquired into for eighteen years. The work that these men did was of tremendous importance to the nation. Thirty millions of revenue was brought in annually by them. This immense department employed about 3,000 men, and the system under which they worked had not been looked into for a period of eighteen years. He ventured to say that any large private concern, after employing 3,000 men for so long a period, would make inquiry into the system of employment or the necessity of increasing the pay. He, therefore, hoped that a Parliamentary Committee would be granted by the Treasury, and that they would not be met on this Vote as on the last with a refusal.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that there was an inquiry about 1889, when the Commission took evidence but made no recommendation. He rather gathered from the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken that he suggested that, because eighteen years had elapsed, therefore there should be an inquiry into the question of the wages paid in the Excise Department. He differed from that view, because if every Department was to have the whole of its affairs turned upside down at the end of each eighteen years, Members of that House would not be able to attend to their Parliamentary duties, as they would be occupied by these inquiries, and he supposed with reports, which really were the duty of the responsible Minister in charge of the Department concerned. Before saying whether there ought or ought not to be an inquiry, they should look into the facts of the case and see whether the wages in this, or indeed any other department of the Civil Service, were in the deplorable condition which had been rather suggested, although in a very moderate speech, by the hon. Member for Blackburn. He had made some very careful inquiries into the conditions of service and the amount of pay of officers of Excise. The hon. Member for Blackburn had made an unfavourable comparison between the pay of Excise officers and the second division clerks. Into this question he proposed to go with a certain amount of minuteness. There were at the present moment 540 assistants in the Excise. They were the bottom class of Excise officers. But there was a difference between them and the lowest class of Customs officers, because they were subject to open competitive examination. They proceeded from assistants in Excise to the second class of Excise officers, of whom there were about 950. They proceeded to the second class of officers by seniority—pure seniority. Then they proceeded, also by pure seniority, to the first-class of Excise officers, of whom there were 1,460. It was rather noticeable that in the three classes the increase in the number of posts rose with the increase of pay and responsibility. There were 540 assistants who rose to the higher positions, and of these higher positions there were 950 for the 1,460. The assistants of Excise began at £50 a year plus 2s. a day, to which the hon. Gentleman had rather slightingly alluded. They had not found that the assistants of Excise in any way regarded that 2s. a day as a negligible quantity, and he thought that they had hailed with rather more delight than the hon. Gentleman would admit the concession made by the Prime Minister in February, 1907, when he extended the 2s. a day to sick leave and annual leave. The assistants went up to a maximum of £80 plus the 2s. a day.

The pay of the second-class officers went from £115, by £7 10s. a year, to £160, and they then, still by seniority, became eligible for first-class officers, whose pay went up from £180, by a varying increase of £7 10s. or £10, up to £250. But they did not stop there. Provided that they could pass the qualifying examination, there were fifty assistant supervisorships open to them at £280, and 234 supervisorships on a scale varying from £280 to £320 a year. Above that again there were 176 supervisorships on a scale of £340, rising by £15 a year up to £400. Beyond these very desirable posts to which he had alluded, there were open 105 places on a scale varying from £450 to £800 a year, or in other words one man in four could go to a scale which was in excess of £250 a year, and might rise to £800 a year. After these figures, which he had taken out with the greatest care and minuteness, could anyone in that Committee say that there was any need for a Parliamentary inquiry because the wages were insufficient? He ventured to think that the Committee would agree with him that there was no case for a Parliamentary inquiry. There was a complaint made by the Excise officers in relation to the fact that the sum of £10,500 a year, which was paid originally by the Board of Trade, he believed, and subsequently by the Board of Agriculture, for collecting agricultural statistics, was taken away from them. And so it was. It was taken away from them in the year 1890, but the maximum scale was raised as against this £10,500, from £140 to £160, which he thought was a fair equivalent for the amount of which the Excise officers were deprived. The question of the block of promotion was a matter which ought to be explained to the Committee. The hon. Gentleman was perfectly entitled to draw attention to this matter. The block of promotion to the second class was due to the fact that in 1880 and 1883 no less than 950 officers were recruited for the purpose of dealing with the beer duties introduced by Mr. Gladstone. There were many more officers recruited in those two years than events subsequently justified, and the absorption of these officers in the general staff had undoubtedly retarded promotion very considerably. About the year 1894 exactly the state of things to which he alluded in relation to Customs occurred in regard to Excise. But promotion which was retarded in 1894 was correspondingly accelerated in 1903–4, for it appeared that periods of ten years separated the accelerating and retarding of promotion in both those departments. The accelerated promotion had resulted in this, that whereas it was calculated that the promotion of second class officers ought to take place after fourteen years service, it now took place after eleven years service, and he thought that that was a consideration which ought to be borne in mind when they had to look at what was taking place in the Service. He would like to point out to the Committee that in the Goschen Minute of 1891, which was rather regarded as the Magna Charta upon this point, it was expressly laid down that no officer could plead a prospective right to compensation in respect of any post in existence when he entered the Service and which had been abolished. That was expressly laid down, and was perfectly well known to officers in the Service at the time, and to those who entered subsequently. The hon. Member for Blackburn had said something about the scale of pay as between the second division clerks with a maximum of £300, and the Excise officer, unless that officer got one of the superior positions in regard to which one in four could attain to above £250. He did not share the low estimate of the second division clerks which apparently the hon. Member entertained. The hon. Member had said, he thought, that the second division clerks always worked under supervision, and that really the Excise officers' duties were infinitely more responsible and more laborious. He thought that they might be more laborious as far as manual work was concerned, but they were certainly not more responsible, and the hon. Gentleman was not accurate in saying that the second division clerks always worked under supervision. He had made inquiry that morning on that very point, and, if he might say so, he had used almost the same argument as the hon. Member, in making his inquiry. He had been most distinctly assured that while, during the first four or five years, the second division clerk did work under supervision and got correspondingly lower pay than the Excise officer, after six or seven years the second division clerk got into superior and responsible work in which he was not supervised, and from that point onwards, until he reached the £300 limit, he was doing much better work than the Excise officer. There was not much promotion open to the second division clerk, but such as there was was not so good as that which was open to the Excise clerk. There were very few superior posts now open to the second division clerks, and they were mostly minor staff posts. The maximum salary to be obtained in one of these minor staff posts was about £400 or £450. But whatever the exact amount was, opportunities for promotion and the scale of pay open to the second division clerk above that of his proper rank were much less than those open to the Excise officer. That, he hoped, was a clear and satisfactory explanation of the relative positions of these two classes of servants. Of course there was going to be fusion between these two classes, but he could assure the hon. Member—these questions would be a matter of personal consideration by himself, and he had had some experience of them—that he would give the utmost attention to seeing that, so far as in him lay, neither in prospects nor in promotion would the Excise officers be allowed to suffer by the fusion of the two classes. With regard to the special Commissioners of income-tax, the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London was quite right in supposing that the increase in the number of special Commissioners was due to differentiation. That had caused an increase not only in their number but in that of second division clerks. That increase, of course, had been very much more than made up by the increase of revenue. There was also this other fact, that in consequence of differentiation the number of appeals arising from the imposition of any income-tax at all, and the remission of income-tax, had very greatly increased in number, and that had led to a great stress in the work of the special income-tax commissioners and to a necessary increase of numbers.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he was led to ask for information in reference to what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They had heard from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that an increased burden would be thrown upon these Excise officers by the Old-Age Pensions Bill when it became law, and it was with regard to the future position of these Excise officers that he was now asking for information. He wanted to know whether, when they had to perform these extra duties, which according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be very heavy, the establishment of the Excise officers and their rate of pay would be increased?

MR. HOBHOUSE said he thought it was somewhat premature to ask him to say what would be the exact pay in future.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL: Not the exact pay—whether it will be increased.

*MR. HOBHOUSE said that was practically what he meant. He had assured the Committee, and it was no idle assurance, that when the two staffs came to be fused, as undoubtedly they must be fused in the future, every endeavour would be made to see that neither allowed to suffer. There might be individual hardships, which must occur in all amalgamations of staffs, but so far as one could speak of classes, and perhaps of individuals, no hardships would be allowed to accrue. But it would be quite impossible to pledge himself as to the exact amount either of scale or increment, and he must reserve liberty of action in that matter. While he could not accept the proposition of a Parliamentary inquiry, he would be only too glad to meet Members and see what he could do in cases of individual hardship. He was afraid he could not accept the proposition that there should be a Parliamentary inquiry into this matter merely because eighteen years had elapsed since there was an inquiry.

*MR. SNOWDEN regretted the very unsatisfactory nature of the reply to his very reasonable request for an inquiry into these alleged grievances. He certainly never based his case on the fact that eighteen years had elapsed since the last inquiry, but on much more substantial grounds. He should have, therefore, to move a reduction of the vote by £100. He wanted to deal with one or two points which had been advanced by the hon. Gentleman in the course of his reply. He had given as his justification for refusing to accede to his request that there were higher posts open to these officers. Of course there were, but it was only possible for 17 per cent. to reach them, and the number of higher posts was being reduced, and it was absolutely certain that if the proposed amalgamation of the outdoor services was consummated there would be an enormous reduction in the higher posts of Customs and of Excise. It was possible for one in five or six officers of Excise to go above £250 a year, but that was no compensation to the four out of every five who were compelled to remain at the low salary, and that was really what the hon. Gentleman's argument amounted to. Then, again, with regard to his comparison of the character of the work of the second division and the respective salaries, Sir Algernon West, who had had experience of both branches of the service, and had not only had the supervision of the outdoor Excise staff but of hundreds of second division clerks, stated before the Ridley Commission that the work of the Excise staff was very much superior to and far more responsible than that of second division clerks. Then, again, from whom did the hon. Gentleman get his information that morning as to the superiority and greater responsibility of the work of the second division clerks? It was from the officials of the Treasury who were indoor men.

*MR. HOBHOUSE: No, I did not. I got it from the regular staff of the Inland Revenue Department.

*MR. SNOWDEN said that that brought him to another point. There had been a transformation in the control of the Inland Revenue Department within the last ten or fifteen years. Before that time the Excise Secretary to the Board of Inland Revenue was invariably recruited from the outdoor department. That was not so now. All the plums of the Excise Department were now appropriated by Treasury men. The Commissioners were Treasury men. The Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue was a Treasury man, who would not know the instrument used for assessing the duty on beer from a gramophone, and this was the man who was put in charge of an important Revenue Department. That was one of the grievances which the outdoor staff had, the want of sympathy between the most responsible officials of the department and the outdoor staff. Then, again—and this he thought was the main point upon which the hon. Gentleman had based his refusal to accede to their request—the Secretary to the Treasury had said there were not open to second division clerks in the Revenue service so many higher posts as there were to the first class officers of Excise. He found on page 26 of the Estimates that provision was made for 123 second division clerks and for 56 higher clerkships, which were recruited from the second division clerks, with salaries running up to £500 a year. The second division clerk, in the Inland Revenue Department, therefore, had a one to three chance of rising to £400 or £500 a year, whereas the outdoor Excise officer, doing far more responsible work, had only one in six.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: Will the hon. Member look at the next page?

Mr. SNOWDEN said it was quite sufficient that he should look where the fact was stated.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said there were 162 second class clerks with only three minor posts.

Mr. SNOWDEN said that that did not affect the point at all that in the chief Department of the Board of Inland Revenue there were 135 second division clerks and fifty-six superior clerks recruited from the second division. The proportion he admitted was rather less if they took them all, but the second division clerks of the Inland Revenue Department had a far better chance of reaching a higher salary than the outdoor officer of Excise. The hon. Gentleman had not met a single point which had been advanced in the discussion. He therefore had to carry his protest into the division lobby.

Whereupon Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £1,523,500, be granted for the said Service"—(*Mr. Snowden.*)

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 45; Noes, 90. (Division List No. 116.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Barnard, E. B.
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bryce, J. Annan
Clough, William
Cooper, G. J.
Crooks, William
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Flynn, James Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Grayson, Albert Victor
Halpin, J.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hazleton, Richard
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Laidlaw, Robert
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Killop, W.
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard.
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sears, J. E.
Shackleton, David James
Sherwell, Arthur James
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Wardle and Mr. Summerbell.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Boulton, A. C. F.

Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Brunner, RtHn. SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bull Sir William James
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Cleland, J. W.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dickinson, W.H.(St. Pancras, N.
Everett, R. Lacey
Forster, Henry William
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gurdon, RtHn. Sir W. Brampton
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Henderson, J.M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Jackson, R. S.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire)
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Myer, Horatio
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Partington, Oswald
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, A.H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Spicer, Sir Albert
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Valentia, Viscount
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Master of Elibank and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee to sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [28TH MAY].

Resolutions reported.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

CLASS V.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid."

CLASS III.

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £127,889, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Inspector of Reformatories, and for the Maintenance of Juvenile Offenders in Reformatory, Industrial, and Day Industrial Schools, and under the Youthful Offenders Act, in Great Britain."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £400,345, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Expenses of the Prisons in England, Wales, and the Colonies."

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £28,781, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Maintenance of Criminal Lunatics in the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum."

Resolutions read a second time.

First Resolution postponed.

Subsequent Resolutions agreed to.

Postponed Resolution to be further considered To-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes after Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 11th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Nine petitions from Blaenavon, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Lawford's Gate, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Ford; and Huddersfield (six); to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition from Bermondsey, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Fulham, against praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Shoreditch, against; to lie upon the Table.

WOMEN'S ENFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

Petition from Newport (Salop), in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND) PENSION FUND.

Return [presented 10th June] to be printed. [No. 171.]

EXPERIMENTS ON LIVING ANIMALS.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 4th June; *Mr. Herbert Samuel*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 172.]

SICK AND WOUNDED IN WAR.

Copy presented, of Papers relating to the Geneva Convention, 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Seventh Annual General Report of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, 1906–7 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4005 and 4009 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 19) Warrant, 1908, dated 21st May, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Report and Papers relating to the Training of Teachers for the year 1906–7 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE (FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS).

Copy presented, of Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign countries and British Possessions for 1907, compared with the four preceding years. Volume II. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (UNITED KINGDOM).

Return ordered, "showing for the years 1906 and 1907 the value of our Exports and Consignments from France, the United States, Belgium, and Germany respectively, distinguishing between food, drink and tobacco, raw materials, and manufactures."—(*Mr. Pike Pease.*)

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN ACT, 1905.

Return ordered, "as to the proceedings of Distress Committees in England and Wales and of the Central (Unemployed)

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Body for London under The Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, during the year ended the 31st day of March, 1908."—(*Mr. John Burns.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Naval Construction.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what was the total amount spent on naval construction, including guns, during each of the last three financial years; and what amount in each year was spent under contract with private firms.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The following table shows the expenditure, exclusive of establishment and incidental charges, upon new construction during the last three financial years—

	1905–6.	1906–7.	1907–8.
	£	£	£
Dockyard-built ships - - - -	4,373,192	3,326,708	3,124,686
Contract-built ships - - - -	5,314,852	5,535,189	4,691,986
Totals - - - -	9,688,044	8,861,897	7,816,672

The approximate expenditure upon guns for new ships was as follows—

	£
1905–6 - - -	632,700
1906–7 - - -	724,800
1907–8 - - -	446,000

and the amounts paid to contractors formed about two-thirds of the total in each year.

Cancelled Telegrams.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can give the number of business telegrams that are cancelled each year; and how many betting telegrams are cancelled in each year, or an approximate number.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The number of telegrams cancelled before their signalling had been begun during the twelve months ended 31st May last was 2,620; 307 of these related to betting. The number cancelled after their signalling had been begun is not known.

Clanricarde Evictions.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the amount of expenses incurred in connection with the Clanricarde evictions since 1885; the cost of soldiers and police attending evictions; and the cost of extra police and protection force since 1885.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer the hon. Member to Table C. of Appendix I. to the Report of the Evicted Tenants Commission, 1893 [Cd. 6935], which shows the cost of evictions and proceedings in connection with evictions on the Clanricarde estate from 1st May, 1879, up to the date of the Report. I have no information as to the cost of evictions on the estate since 1893, but I understand that the evictions which have since taken place were few in number compared with the evictions between 1879 and 1893.

Vice-Regal Commission on Irish Railways.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state when the Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Irish railways may be expected; whether in the meantime any temporary measures will be taken to reduce the rates and charges now enforced; and whether he is aware that Irish commercialists and agriculturists complain of being handicapped under the present system.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Third Interim Report of the Commission, with Minutes of Evidence, has been laid before Parliament, and a further volume is in the Press. The Commissioners are not in a position to say when their final Report will be ready, but good progress has been made with the taking of evidence. Until the Report has been received the Government cannot consider the question of reducing the rates and charges now enforced. It is the case that the present rates are complained of, hence the appointment of the Commission.

Indian Frontier Operations.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether any, and, if so, how many, prisoners were taken in the recent military operations on the frontier; and how it is intended to deal with such prisoners if there are any.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Secretary of State has no information as to the first part of the Question. Any prisoners that may have been taken were presumably released when their tribe came to terms.

Irish Treasury Remembrancer.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the terms of the Treasury Minute referred to in the last paragraph of the Treasury Minute of 4th January, 1871, constituting the office of Treasury Remembrancer in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The terms of the Minute referred to are given below. "My Lords are pleased to appoint Mr. Herbert Murray of this office to the post of Treasury Remembrancer and Deputy-Paymaster in Ireland at a salary of £1,200 per annum from 1st January. Mr. Murray will discharge the duty of Receiver of Constabulary without further remuneration. He will for the present be subordinate to the Paymaster-General upon all matters connected with the Pay Office. On other matters he will receive instructions from this Board alone. He will at his discretion employ the clerks in his office upon any business which may be entrusted to him."

Pensions.

Mr. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, while the pay or pension of persons in receipt of a naval or military pension accepting a civil appointment is reduced in consequence of such last-mentioned pension, the service during naval or military employment is not allowed to count as part of the qualifying period for a civil pension; whether, in the result, a person, although serving the State the full period of forty years, is never able to claim a full civil pension if any portion of the time has been given to either naval or military service; and, if so, what action he proposes to take.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) No deduction is made from either pay or pension in the case of persons below the rank of commissioned officers who obtain civil employment, and the civil pensions of such persons are of course calculated on the length of their civil employment. I do not propose to take any action.

Civil Service Examiners.

Sir W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Civil Service Commissioners have recently issued a circular to those who have acted as examiners for the Commission requiring them to state their date of birth; and under whose authority such information has been demanded, and with what object.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) A circular was issued by the authority of the Civil Service Commissioners to some of their "assistant examiners" (*see* Civil Service Commission Estimate, Sub-head B.), requesting them to furnish the date of their birth, as, in the opinion of the Commissioners, it is desirable that they should know the age of the persons employed by them in the conduct and superintendence of examinations.

Supply of Certificated Teachers.

Mr. YOXALL (Manchester, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state the grounds on which the Board make the statement in their General Report on the Instruction and Training of Pupil Teachers, and again in the Report of the Board for the year 1906–7, that there is a grave doubt whether the supply of certificated teachers is likely in the immediate future to prove sufficient; and whether there is any evidence of that in recent experience.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The grounds upon which the Board of Education anticipate a possible shortage of certificated teachers in the course of a few years are set out in detail in Paragraphs 50 to 55 of the Introduction to the General Report on the Instruction and Training of Pupil Teachers (Cd. 3582, 1907), which has been presented to Parliament. This anticipation is based, not upon the evidence of actual experience as to difficulties at present met by local education authorities and managers of schools in obtaining the services of certificated teachers, but upon a calculation of the possible demand for such teachers in the immediate future and a comparison of this demand with the number of boys and girls who entered the earlier stages of the teaching profession in 1906, and must be looked to to supply that demand. It should, however, be explained that the calculation in question is, as is clearly set out in the paragraphs of the Report referred to above, of a hypothetical character. It proceeds on the assumption that the country will desire to employ in the future a far larger number of certificated teachers in proportion to the number of children in elementary schools than is at present employed, and also upon the further assumption, which was justified by such evidence (admittedly neither abundant nor altogether satisfactory) as was available at the time when the Report was drawn up, that the rate of wastage from the ranks of pupil teachers during the period of their preliminary education and training will be high. In proportion as the increase of certificated teachers is deferred, or as the wastage during pupil teachership is checked, or the number of boys and girls who annually become bursars or pupil teachers is increased, the anticipated shortage will obviously be diminished. The Board have reason to believe that the rate of wastage amongst pupil teachers is now, owing to the closer supervision exercised by local education authorities, considerably less than it was a few years ago, and careful statistical inquiries are being made in order to ascertain the precise rate of wastage which now prevails.

National Expenditure.

Mr. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give an estimate of the increase in the expenditure provided for in the Budget of 1908–9, as compared with the Budget of 1905–6, owing to increased pay or improved rations or emoluments in the Navy, Army, Post Office, and other civil services.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) No, Sir. The information would have to be furnished by the respective departments concerned.

Territorial Staff Allowance.

Colonel IVOR PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether any orders have been issued by the Army Council regarding the payment of allowances to the staff sergeant-majors of the Territorial Yeomanry and Infantry; if so, will he state the nature of such orders; whether, before issuing such orders, the opinions of commanding officers of units were obtained; and, if so, whether the orders issued are in conformity with the majority of the views expressed.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Presumably my hon. and gallant friend is referring to the permanent staff of the Territorial Force, including the acting sergeant-majors. Instructions have been issued to County Associations in regard to the payments to be made for work not strictly within their duties. These were the same as the regulations hitherto applicable to Volunteer Corps. The opinions of commanding officers were not obtained before the issue of the regulations. It must be remembered that this staff is part of the organisation of the Regular Army.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Territorial Cyclists.

Mr. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether ten battalions of Territorial cyclists are to be formed in Great Britain; and whether, in spite of the fact that Worcestershire, Warwickshire, and Staffordshire sent four companies of cyclists to the manœuvres at Beverley in August last, it is not proposed to form a cyclists' battalion in the Midlands.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): Ten battalions of Territorial cyclists are to be formed in Great Britain. Their primary duty is watching the coast-line, and accordingly they are as far as possible to be formed in counties situated on the coast, owing to the necessity for local geographical knowledge. There is no present intention of raising a cyclist battalion in the Midlands.

The Fighting at Kargha.

Mr. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to state, with regard to the recent fighting at Kargha, how many prisoners were taken by the British general; and what was the number of the enemy wounded.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): No information has been received as to the numbers of wounded or prisoners in the recent fighting. I am informed that the Pathan invariably carries away his wounded and does not usually hold positions long enough to enable prisoners to be made.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): May I ask whether there is any kind of justification for the underlying assumption that generals in India prefer otherwise to dispose of the wounded?

Mr. BUCHANAN: I should be sorry to believe, and I do not believe, that there is that underlying assumption.

Mr. MACKARNESS inquired whether any information had been asked for since he first put this Question on the Paper.

Mr. BUCHANAN was understood to say that special telegraphic inquiry had not been made, but that full information was received from time to time direct from the General with regard to the fighting.

Mr. MACKARNESS asked whether the provisions of the Geneva Convention and the regulations of the Hague Convention as to the treatment of prisoners were regarded as applicable to these punitive expeditions.

*Mr. REES: May I ask whether those provisions are invariably observed by the enemy in such cases?

Mr. MACKARNESS: May I have an Answer to my Question?

Mr. BUCHANAN: I must have notice of the Question.

Indian Press Laws.

Dr. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the House will have an opportunity of discussing the new proposals of the Government of India for restricting the freedom of the Press before they are sanctioned by the Secretary of State for India.

Mr. BUCHANAN: As the hon. Member is doubtless aware, the Explosives Bill and the Newspaper Bill were passed at a meeting of the Legislative Council on Monday and are now law. No formal assent by the Secretary of State is necessary. I ought, however, to state that the Acts are framed in accordance with views approved by him after full consideration. The full text of the Newspaper Act is being telegraphed home; when it arrives it will be laid on the Table and circulated forthwith.

Dr. RUTHERFORD: As I understand there is a "blocking" Motion on this important subject, may I ask the Prime Minister whether he will press forward his Motion in order that the House may be enabled to deal with this urgent matter?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I have done my best. I put down the Motion the other day, and hoped it would have been passed. Unless we can get it by general consent, I despair of carrying it.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Can the Prime Minister say when the Indian Budget will be taken?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot say at present. It will be brought forward at a reasonably early date.

*MR. REES: Will the "blocking" Motion avail to prevent the discussion of this matter on the Indian Budget?

*MR. SPEAKER: No. The matter will be open for discussion on the introduction of the Indian Budget.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the new Indian Press Act provides that there shall be no procedure before a Court in dealing with offending newspapers, and that the Government will simply instruct a magistrate, who will enter the office of the offending publication, close it at once with the aid of the police and confiscate the plant; or whether the law provides for a judicial element in each stage of the process, and, if so, what procedure is laid down.

MR. BUCHANAN: We have not yet received the full text of the Act as passed, which is to be telegraphed to-day. Until it is before the Secretary of State, perhaps the hon. Member will be content with my assurance that the statement to which he refers is wholly inaccurate, and that the law provides for the hearing of parties by the magistrate and for an appeal to the High Court.

Unclaimed Bank Dividends in Canada.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State or the Colonies whether he can state the total amount of dividends remaining unpaid of all amounts or balances in respect of which no transactions have taken place or no interest paid, and of all drafts and bills of exchange remaining unpaid, in the banks of Canada during the last five years.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): According to the latest published Returns of the Canadian chartered banks—viz., for the period ended 31st December, 1906, the total amount of all dividends which had remained unpaid for more than five years was $3,637. The total amount of balances in respect to which no transactions had taken place, or upon which no interest had been paid during the previous five years, was $554,646; and the total amount of drafts or bills of exchange issued by the banks and remaining unpaid for more than five years was $30,084.

Russo-Japanese War—British Shipping Claims.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the outstanding cases with regard to compensation for damage or loss incurred by British ships during the Russo-Japanese War.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): There are no cases outstanding with Russia beyond those referred to in the Answers to the hon. Member's other two Questions of to-day. His Majesty's Government are still in correspondence with the Japanese Government with regard to the decision of their Prize Courts in the case of a vessel named the "Mukden."

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any statements with regard to the "Hipsang," "St. Kilda," "Ikhona," and "Oldhamia," and are cases still pending in regard to those boats before the Russian Prize Courts; and, if so, when is the information likely to be received.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The cases of the "Hipsang," "St. Kilda," and "Oldhamia," are still pending before the Supreme Prize Court of Appeal at

St. Petersburg, and His Majesty's Government are doing all in their power to expedite their hearing. In the case of the "Ikhona," I am happy to say that the Court of Appeal have reversed the finding of the Libau Port Prize Court, and I trust that the claims arising out of this case may shortly be satisfied.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman say how long it will take to obtain satisfaction?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I can say no more than that we are doing our best to expedite a hearing.

MR. PIKE PEASE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any statement in regard to the case of the "Knight Commander"; whether he has received any answer to the inquiries continually pressed upon the Russian Government; and whether he has received replies to the inquiries which have been addressed to the Government in regard to the case of the "Calchas," and the claim arising in connection with the detention of the P. and O. steamer "Malacca" in the Red Sea.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I beg to refer the hon. Member im connection with the first portion of his Question, to the Answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Hackney on the 2nd instant. His Majesty's Government are still without a reply to the representation they made to the Russian Government in the case of the "Calchas." The matter will be again brought to their notice. I trust that the negotiations which are still in progress in relation to the claims arising out of the detention of the "Malacca" may shortly result in a settlement.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will consider the advisability of setting up a Select Committee, with power to compel witnesses to attend and give evidence upon oath, in order to ascertain the value of the unclaimed balances held or appropriated by banks.

I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that, under the banking laws of Canada, every bank in the Dominion is compelled to make an annual statement of dividends remaining unpaid, of all amounts or balances in respect of which no transactions have taken place or upon which no interest has been paid during the five years previous to the date of such return, and of all drafts or bills of exchange issued by the banks and remaining unpaid for more than five years; whether he is aware that provision is made for the imposition of heavy penalties in case of default, and that these Returns are laid before Parliament; whether he is aware that in the Dominion, by Section 90 of the Bank Act, the Statute of Limitations cannot be pleaded in banking transactions; and whether he will consider the advisability of introducing similar legislation for this country with regard to the Bank of England, joint stock banks, private banks, and Government banks.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I am aware of the provisions of the Canadian Laws to which the hon. Member refers; but, as at present advised, I do not see any sufficient reason for introducing similar legislation for this country, or for setting up a Select Committee, as the hon. Member suggests.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman heard the Answer given to-day by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies as to the large amounts received by the banks in Canada, and whether he does not think the amounts in the banks at home would be enormously larger?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I did not hear the Answer; but I have seen a Canadian Return which shows, I think, about £120,000. I am assured that the total amount throughout the whole of this country would not exceed £500,000 or £600,000. I do not think I am justified at the present moment, on the information in my possession, in instituting an inquiry of the kind suggested.

It would create a sense of unrest among the banking institutions of this country.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Does the right hon. Gentleman consider that the setting up of a Committee, as suggested by my hon. friend, would create a similar amount of unrest to that which the Government's Licensing Bill has already created among the investing classes of the British public?

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman ask the banking companies whether they have any objection to supply Parliament with a Return showing the money which they have received under these different heads?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Inquiries have been made, but the result would not justify anything in the nature of the suggested formal investigation. If my hon. friend has further information to show that the particulars supplied to me are incorrect or that I have been misled, I shall, of course, be glad to consider it; but at present, on the information in my possession, I do not feel justified in granting the request.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): On the plea of unrest, are these banks to be allowed to help themselves to what belongs to other people?

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Even £500,000 a year is worth looking after.

Customs and Excise Changes.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, before it was decided to ask Parliament for power to transfer the Excise to the Customs, any estimate was made as to the saving which might be effected by the change; and, if so, will he state what such estimated saving was in the annual cost of the combined services.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The change is proposed with a view to administrative efficiency, and, although it is anticipated that an ultimate saving will accrue to the Exchequer from the amalgamation, it is not possible at the present time to forecast the financial result.

MR. SNOWDEN: Are we to assume, then, that the Government have come to Parliament with an important proposal of this kind without having gone carefully into the question of the estimated economy?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Member may depend on it that before a change of this kind was proposed it was gravely considered from the point of view of both efficiency and economy.

Income-Tax Declarations.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Board of Inland Revenue ordered surveyors of taxes to send a letter to the effect that the Board had instructed that a full declaration of income from every source, taxed or untaxed, including wife's income, if any, and also of the charges, ground rents, loan and mortgage interests, annuities, etc., must be supplied before any life assurance premiums can be allowed for 1907–8 or future years; and that, unless the claimant was prepared to furnish such a statement, no allowance could be made by schedule, that reclamation could be made, but that the Claims Department would require a similar statement of total income and charges thereon.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No such instructions have been issued. Under Section 19 (2) of the Finance Act, 1907, the allowance for life assurance premiums is to be made in the first instance from earned income, and only from unearned income to the extent to which the allowance claimed exceeds the amount of the earned income. A full statement of earned income is accordingly required from persons claiming the allowance, and also sufficient particulars of unearned income to satisfy the Commissioners that the claimant possesses a net income equal to six times the allowance claimed.

Working Class Magistrates.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is in a position to say how many magistrates of the working class have been appointed in Great Britain since the passing of The Justices of the Peace Act, 1906.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): In the absence of the Lord Chancellor I am unable to give the information asked for, but I will communicate with my hon. friend as soon as possible.

British Homes Assurance Corporation.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say if the Board of Trade has sanctioned the rules framed by the British Homes Assurance Corporation for their house-purchase department, under which they can confiscate all premiums if the certificate holder be three months in arrear, whilst the certificate holder cannot withdraw his deposits; whether this is a building society scheme or an insurance scheme; whether the accounts are audited; and what steps the Board of Trade proposes to take.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): This is a Life Assurance Company which also appears to issue house property purchase certificates. The Board of Trade have no powers to regulate the transactions referred to by the hon. Member or to sanction rules applicable to such business. The accounts of the company are certified annually by the auditors in accordance with the provisions of Section 23 of the Companies Act, 1900.

Irish Treasury Officials.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state to the House what the regulations were that were made by the Treasury in 1837 consolidating and simplifying the accounts of the receipt and issue of public money; and what the reference is to the provision which gave the Treasury power in that year to abolish the office of Vice-Treasurer, and to substitute therefor and create that of Paymaster of Civil Services in Dublin.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): The Treasury was empowered by the Act 6 and 7 Will. IV., cap. 83, to reduce or consolidate the offices of Vice-Treasurer and Teller of the Exchequer in Ireland and to make such regulations in regard to the receipt and issue of the public moneys into and from the receipt of His Majesty's Exchequer in Ireland as might seem proper. In pursuance of this authority the Treasury by Minute, dated 9th May, 1837, placed the control of moneys received into and issued out of the Exchequer in Ireland under the direction of the Comptroller-General of the Exchequer, and it was this change which led to the abolition of the office of the Vice-Treasurer and the creation of the office of Paymaster of Civil Services. The Minute in question was presented to the House of Commons on the 2nd June, 1837. It is printed in Appendix No. 1 to the Report of the Select Committee on Public Moneys, 1856.

Shinn Evicted Tenant.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been called to the circumstances of the eviction of Mr. Bernard Hegan at Shinn, county Down; whether he is aware that Messrs. Fisher and Fisher, solicitors for the evicted family, offered to pay all arrears of rent and all law costs, and that Mr. Fowler, solicitor for the evictors, refused to negotiate; and whether the Estates Commissioners will inquire into the facts and see if anything can be done for the evicted tenant.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners have received no application from Mr. Hegan, and they have no information in regard to the matters referred to in the Question. They are doubtful whether the case is one in which they could interfere.

Royal Veterinary College of Ireland.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether the Government have considered the representations made to them with regard to making the constitution of the governing body of the Royal Veterinary College of Ireland more representative of the veterinary profession in Ireland and of live stock owners; and, if so, what decision has been arrived at.

MR. BIRRELL: The representations referred to in the Question are at present under the consideration of the Department of Agriculture, but it is to be remembered that any alteration in the constitution of the governing body of the Royal Veterinary College for Ireland would require an amendment of the existing charter.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington): Will the Prime Minister say what business is proposed for next Wednesday, and when the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill will be taken?

MR. ASQUITH: Next Wednesday we propose to take the procedure Resolution in regard to the Committee and subsequent stages of the Old-age Pensions Bill and some small Bills not disposed of this week. The Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill will be taken in the following week.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [LORDS].

Ordered, That so much of the Lords Message [20th May] as relates to the Resolution, "That it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill are to be referred," be considered forthwith.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Lords Message considered accordingly.

Resolved, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Resolution.

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

SUPPLY [11TH ALLOTTED DAY.]

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT, Oldham, in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

CLASS II.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £83,124, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, and of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, including certain Grants-in-Aid."

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.) said he thought it desirable before the Committee entered on the discussion of the Vote that he should make a short statement on the subject of small holdings and swine fever. In many quarters, there seemed a disposition to think that sufficient progress had not been made in regard to small holdings and that the Board of Agriculture had not taken the steps which they ought to have taken. Those who had experience of the work of county councils were aware that those bodies had been very energetic indeed in making inquiries, and that much had been done within the last few months towards making the Small Holdings Act thoroughly known throughout the length and breadth of the country. Nothing had been lacking on the part of the Board in the way in which they had carried out their duties. The Act came into force on January 1st of the present year, and although prior to that date the Board had taken some preliminary steps, for practical purposes there had been only five months during which the Act could be put into force. The Act was a very far-reaching one; it was almost revolutionary in the manner it proposed to deal with the land of this country, and therefore it was as well that operations under it should be undertaken in no hasty sense. Since the Act had come into force the Board had divided the country into two parts by a line drawn from the Wash to the Severn, and had appointed two Commissioners. They had been very fortunate in securing the services of two such gentlemen as Mr. Cheney and Mr. Baines. The first-named, as agent to Lord Henniker, had had practical experience in farming land and he was chairman of the Eastern Counties Association which in four years had a turnover exceeding £200,000. If the Act was to be made a success it was of the utmost importance that it should be worked without friction by gentlemen who thoroughly understood the question and were in touch and sympathy not only with the county councils, but also with the landowners and land agents who had confidence in them. Then again he thought they were very fortunate in having as Secretary of the Commission a gentleman of great experience who thoroughly understood the whole machinery for carrying out this most complicated Act. Three permanent inspectors had been appointed, and a special Welsh-speaking inspector would, he hoped, very shortly be selected for Wales. The Board had issued circulars, which had proved most useful and most helpful to the county councils, suggesting the best possible procedure that should be adopted. Indeed the Board was most anxious to assist the county councils in every possible way in carrying out a somewhat difficult Act. A Treasury Minute providing for procedure by scheme had been circulated, and model rules had been issued. He could assure the Committee that the powers of repayment of expenses incurred by county councils on the acquisition of land would be freely used and interpreted in the most liberal spirit by the Board of Agriculture. The county councils would have to be very careful—even more so than a private individual—that they simply gave fair market value for the land, as otherwise the increased rent would bear hardly on the small occupier. Regulations had been made regarding compulsory purchase, but he was glad to think that up till now it had not been necessary for the county councils or the Board of Agriculture to invoke this power. It was, however, of enormous advantage to the county councils to have at their back the provision for compulsory purchase or hiring, enabling them to deal with cantankerous landlords or trustees. Circulars had been published regarding allotments, and rules were drawn up, after consultation with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, assisting those who desired to rent land under Section 9. From the way that the county councils had received these instructions and advice, it was quite clear that they would work in the most amicable spirit with the Board of Agriculture. Now he came to the action taken by the county councils. Complaint had been made in some quarters that the councils were not active enough. They had appointed their statutory committees, and, in some cases, sub-committees, in order that the work might be expedited and more local knowledge gained. These committees had taken steps to ascertain what demands there were for holdings by means of advertisments, posters the circulation of application forms, communication with parish councils and parish meetings, and the issue of summaries of the Act. The net result had been that up to last month 16,000 people had applied for over a quarter of a million acres of land. The county councils were necessarily taking some time in investigating those applications. From the evidence before the Board it was quite clear that the great majority of applicants were suitable, both in regard to capacity and capital. These questions had to be inquired into on the spot, and that was the great advantage of the Act being worked by local men who knew all the circumstances of particular persons. He ventured with some experience of this matter to say, with regard to the question of capital, that it was not entirely a question of amount, as it was very often better to trust a man with only £2 or £3 capital per acre than one with £10 per acre. But that was a question which must be investigated on the spot, and the county councils were the proper bodies to look into it. A question had been frequently asked as to who were eligible to become small owners or tenants. The Committee would agree that the Board had adopted the proper course in giving a wide interpretation as to the eligibility of persons to become small owners or tenants. They did not want to be unduly restrictive. It was perfectly right for the county councils to give the agricultural labourers, the men who were working on the land, the first chance; but when their wants were satisfied it was proper that the artisan, the village tradesman, the butcher, the blacksmith, and the baker who required accommodation land should be provided for. The greater advantages they gave the small tradesmen to remain in the villages and make their businesses more profitable by means of an adjunct of this nature the more it would tend to prevent depopulation of our villages. There was considerable evidence that use would be made of the section enabling county councils to let land to co-operative associations. Bodies of this nature were forming with a view to renting land, and only the previous day he was in Essex and was told that a co-operative association had been formed there with a capital of £1,000 with the object of applying to the county council for land. He had noticed that in some quarters misapprehension existed regarding the £100,000 voted for the purposes of the Act. It seemed to be thought that as the House had voted £100,000 so much of it as had not been spent would have to be repaid to the Treasury. No definite sum was laid down in the Act, but it was arranged that certain money should be provided for such purposes as losses under a scheme, or the expenses for the acquisition of land, or propaganda work. The £100,000 had been put to the credit of the Small Holdings Account, and when that money was spent it would be for the Board to make a further application to the Treasury. It had been suggested that to "demonstrate the feasibility" of setting up small holdings under Section 16 the Board should set up small experimental agricultural holdings, but he was glad to think that there was no necessity to demonstrate the feasibility of establishing small holdings. If at any time it proved necessary to do so, the Board would not shrink from undertaking the work, but while the county councils were showing themselves so ready and anxious to set up the system it was not desirable that a centralised body should interfere in a matter which could be better dealt with locally. The county councils had done very good work indeed during the past five months, and he would remind some of his hon. friends who desired greater progress that sometimes more haste meant less speed. It was most important that this movement should be conducted on thoroughly business lines, because if, by any careless action on the part of a county council, land was let under conditions that could not possibly pay, the result would be a reaction against small holdings. He had every confidence that the county councils intended to make the Act a success, as the Board of Agriculture had always believed they would, and it was quite clear that they were well equipped to carry it out.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): Could the hon. Baronet say how many out of the 16,000 applications for small holdings have been actually dealt with by the county councils?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Certainly; an enormous number have been dealt with, and the great majority are under consideration.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): When the hon. Baronet says that an enormous number of applications have been dealt with, does that mean that the land has been provided?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: It does not mean that 16,000 men are now in occupation of a quarter of a million acres of land. These are the applications which have been made to county councils, and the right hon. Gentleman, with his great experience, must know that in five months it would be impossible to place 16,000 men on a quarter of a million acres.

MR. CHAPLIN: I never supposed for a moment that they had all been provided with land. I asked whether any of them had.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: When I used the expression I did not think it could give rise to any misunderstanding in regard to these applications. It meant that they had come before the county councils who were dealing with them. It does not mean that they have all been granted.

*MR. MACKARNESS: Have any actually been granted?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: Perhaps my hon. friend will ask his question later on. The hon. Baronet, proceeding, said that the question of swine fever had been exercising the agricultural mind very much indeed. It was a matter of great regret that the number of outbreaks of swine fever had increased very considerably during the last two years. Representations had been made to the Board of Agriculture on the question, and the Board had decided to initiate a new system as regards the procedure for dealing with the disease. The general principle underlying the new Orders which came into force on 1st June, was simplifying the restrictions governing the movement of swine generally and giving greater facilities for the movement of swine for immediate slaughter. The special feature of the Swine Fever Order was that different methods were to be adopted as regards the isolation of swine in the actual place in which the disease existed, and of those on other parts of the same premises. That was to say that, supposing an outbreak took place on a large farm, under the old regulations the whole of the farm premises were as a rule declared to be an Infected Place and no swine could be moved into or out of the premises. Under this order only the particular sties and barns where the diseased or suspected pigs were kept would be declared the Infected Place. Breeding swine within the infected place would be slaughtered, and compensation for these would be paid, while the stores would have to remain upon those premises until slaughtered by the owner. At the present moment, slaughter was not generally carried out. Further, it would be possible under the new Order to remove from the parts of premises not declared an Infected Place under certain conditions swine for slaughter. It was very important that swine for slaughter could be removed from a farm, although they could not, of course, be removed from the Infected Place. The gain there was that while the more severe restrictions on the actual premises would apply to the particular sties in which the disease existed, on the other hand, the whole premises would be under general movement regulations.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) thought the Committee would be interested to know whether any small-holders were at present getting any benefit from the recent Small Holdings Act. The *Daily Mail* had started one small holding as an example to the rest of the country, and he would be very glad to know if the Government had been equally successful. With regard to swine fever, he must confess he found it a little difficult to follow the explanations of the hon. Baronet. They were glad to know that he held very strong views on that question. He indicated earlier in the year his strong belief that something very drastic was necessary in order to deal with that disease, and they were in hopes that when the new regulations came out they would reflect those opinions; but he was bound to say, as far as he could understand them—and it was a little difficult to follow their exact meaning—that they did not seem to indicate any real attempt to deal with that most difficult subject. There was a great relaxation on one side, and an increase of compensation on the other, and if they were going to pay, everybody must agree that the compensation should be accompanied by some definite belief that they were going to deal with the disease in the same way that they had dealt with similar diseases before. The Memorandum of the Board of Agriculture seemed to be very halting with reference to those regulations. They said—

> "These regulations have not been adopted by the Board without some hesitation, and in their opinion they are likely to be a source of danger unless extreme vigilance and caution are observed by the local authorities in their administration."

He thought the new set of regulations would not alter the present very unsatisfactory condition of things, and it was not encouraging to find the Board saying that they might be a source of danger unless the local authorities exercised extreme vigilance. It therefore made him look with a little suspicion on the subject. He would be glad if the hon. Baronet could tell them the intention of the Board as to "the inner and outer radius of infection." What was the meaning of a sty within a farm? Was the one sty where an animal was found to be infected to be the area, or where did the radius of infection end? If that was to be judged by the local authorities, it seemed to him to be a very difficult thing, whereas if they were to wait until the central authority sent an inspector down, there would be very great risk of the infection having gone very far beyond the original sty which was to be the inner radius of infection; and when they once introduced two systems on the same farm it seemed to lead to very considerable danger, and not to be likely to eradicate this extremely infectious disease. He had hoped that the pathologists might have discovered something more satisfactory than now existed in connection with the eradication of the disease, and that they might look forward to the elimination of the disease from the list of contagious diseases, but he saw nothing on the part of the Board to favour any idea of that sort. He would like to understand who was to be the authority to give leave for the animals to be removed from premises in a sort of second circle, or more favoured circle, of infection, and whether the compensation to be given was to be absolutely full compensation for all the animals destroyed within the inner circle, because that was rather an important point so far as agriculturists were concerned. The hon. Baronet had not referred to the new regulations with regard to sheep-dipping. He did not think they stood in a very satisfactory position in reference to sheep scab. Every year they found the disease was undoubtedly re-introduced from the moorland districts of the country. They found the disease almost disappearing in the summer, but every winter it again increased. Last year was by no means satisfactory as compared with one or two past years, and he did not think there was very much difference in the new sheep-dipping order as compared with the others. Certainly it had the advantage of consolidating them and making them a little simpler, but otherwise he did not think there had been any very great change. He would like to know whether the Board considered that they had now got to the root of the matter by these regulations, and hoped to stamp out the disease, which he thought there was little doubt could be done if consistent efforts were made. He would be glad to hear whether any good results had already been achieved by the new Orders in connection with glanders and farcy issued a few months ago. As he was on the subject of contagious diseases, he would ask the hon. Baronet whether he was able, in connection with a matter which he had brought before the House on several occasions, to give them any information with regard to pests, especially the gooseberry mildew. The other day he saw a notice in the paper to the effect that the Board was convinced that the disease was very considerably increasing in England, and giving a warning to growers. He thought it would be extremely useful if the Board would accept the suggestion he had made on more than one occasion in that House, viz., to publish the districts, so that the growers would know in what particular districts the disease existed. At present they were unable to know whether it was near at hand or far off, and it would be very valuable if the Board would give them some particulars in connection with the actual districts, so that growers near the source of infection could take special pains, and that the county authorities also might be advised, so that they could endeavour to stop what was really a very serious pest. In reference to black scab in potatoes, the Board had before them some very useful suggestions made by a conference held in connection with that important matter, and he would be glad if the hon. Baronet could say whether the Board had fully considered those suggestions and were prepared to carry them out. It was most important, before they got to another seed-time for potatoes, that some measures should be taken to stop the transference of seeds from infected districts, as it was by that means that the disease was undoubtedly spread throughout the country. Another matter of very great interest to agriculturists and to the country at large, was the question of horse-breeding—one of the most important subjects that could possibly be brought before the House at the present time. They had lately had before them the Report of the Royal Commission on Horse-breeding, and he was glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon in his place, because he was much better able to deal with that question. The matter was one upon which they needed very full information, especially in view of the present position, since the Report of the Commission. There could be no doubt whatever that on the question of the supply of horses for all purposes, whether for internal use or for the Army, they had to face an entirely new condition of things. The old sources of supply would be very seriously diminished in the future, and the country would not be able to depend as they did in the last war upon many sources which were extremely useful at that time. If that was the case, they must look to the Board of Agriculture to take the first steps, and there was considerable hope in the country that that was being done. Very soon after the present Government came into office an important conference, at which all those interested in horse-breeding were present, took place, and a thorough discussion was held, and the President of the Board was undoubtedly extremely sympathetic in his final summing up of the results of that conference. The conference came to the conclusion that it was necessary to improve the present position of the industry, and to find a remedy for the unsatisfactory and even dangerous state of things which admittedly existed. In July, 1906, the matter was brought forward, suggestions were made, and it was left to the Board to consider and to bring forward their scheme. What had been the result? They had waited, and the Royal Commission had waited, and all those interested had waited, but up to the present they had had no answer whatever. The only light thrown upon the subject was in the speech made by the President of the Board last year at Scarborough, about a year after the conference, when he made some serious reflections upon the Royal Commission and said that the conference had really given him very little assistance, and he left them with the hope that they could expect very little at present from him. He did not think they could allow the matter to stand there. It was a matter of vital and immediate importance, and therefore they asked the hon. Baronet, acting on behalf of the Board of Agriculture, to let them feel that the matter was engaging the serious attention of the Board, and that they were prepared to give the country some satisfaction on a matter which was causing very serious dissatisfaction. The President, in his speech at Scarborough, seemed to imply that the question had resolved itself into a raid upon the Treasury. Possibly it was so, but seeing that this country was endeavouring to deal with the important question of horse-breeding as a national object on the small amount of £5,000, he thought the first thing necessary was to have a little more public money. They could not possibly do the work without the funds, and it was, he thought, an object they might particularly press upon the Treasury. After all, it was not a very large amount that was required. He thought the largest amount that had been asked for had been £25,000, and he believed the Royal Commission asked for only £20,000. He hoped therefore that in view of the unanimity of opinion of all those connected with horse-breeding as to the absolute necessity for immediate action, and of the fact that they could not get improvement without further Treasury funds, the hon. Baronet would be able to say that the Board were prepared not only to deal with the question, but also strongly to press the Treasury to give the necessary funds. If they could not get anything out of the Board, he would be obliged to move a reduction in the salary of the President of the Board of Agriculture in order to express at all events his dissatisfaction at the manner in which this question had been dealt with.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said he wished to ask the Chairman's ruling on a point of order in connection with one of the questions raised by his hon. friend who had just sat down, viz., the question of the Royal Commission on Horse-breeding, and the Report which it had recently issued. Would it be in order to discuss the Report of that Commission on this Vote, with the proposals and the recommendations which it made, and would he be justified if he desired to take part in that debate in entering thoroughly into that question?

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have not had an opportunity of reading the Report in question, but in reply to the right hon. Gentleman, if hon. Members desire to press upon the Board of Agriculture that the Board should spend more money of which they themselves should have control, that would be in order. It is not in order, however, to discuss a matter which comes on another Vote, the Vote of £5,000, which is for the King's premiums distributed by the Horse-breeding Commission. I understood that the hon. Member for Ashford asked for more money which the Board was to distribute, but if he had asked for money for the Commission to distribute he would not have been in order.

*MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock) said that the object of the Motion which stood in his name was to call attention to what he ventured to think was a highly critical and unsatisfactory condition of affairs with respect to the carrying out of the provisions of the Small Holdings Act, and the responsibility of the Board of Agriculture in that connection. He was well aware that a general impression prevailed in some quarters that on the whole the county councils had done well in their endeavours to carry out the new Act, but many of these eulogies came, he thought, from urban journalists who knew very little of the conditions of rural life. One expert, however, Mr. Beaumont, secretary of the Small Holdings Co-operative Association, appeared to share this prevalent optimism to some extent, but the instances of county council work adduced by Mr. Beaumont scarcely bore out the belief. In Cambridgeshire some 10,000 acres had been applied for, and the county council were hoping to get about 1,000 acres by next Michaelmas. That was good as far as it went, but when and how were the 9,000 acres to be secured? In Rutland, out of fifty-two applicants only twenty-three were held to be "suitable"; and of these twenty-three, it was recommended that twelve should be provided with land by private arrangements with a local nobleman and the Member of Parliament for the county. The chairman of the small holdings committee in Rutland had expressed his opinion that "The Act would not prove to be a great success." In the Isle of Ely the county council committee had actually resolved to entertain no applications except from districts where land was voluntarily offered! The question was were hon. Members who were interested in this Act really satisfied with what had been done and what was likely to be done in the future? There might be one or two Liberal Members in that House who for local reasons were not especially anxious that the Small Holdings Act should be carried out in a very complete or thorough fashion; but he could say without hesitation that nine-tenths of the rural Members on that side of the House were very deeply interested in the success of the Act. They had waited for land reform in the past, they recognised the genuine enthusiasm for the measure aroused in the country districts, and they trusted to the pledges of official Liberalism. They felt that unless the Board of Agriculture shook off its complacent optimism and put salutary pressure on some of the county councils, the Small Holdings Act in many parts of England would stand a serious risk of proving a comparative failure. Let him ask in passing whether anybody who knew our rural districts really believed that the average county council was genuinely anxious to make the Small Holdings Act a success? Why, the ordinary county councillor—of course there were exceptions—regarded this Act, at best with lukewarm enthusiasm or sullen acquiescence, and, at worst, with open and undisguised hostility. He did not wish to be unduly severe on these people—their attitude was, he supposed, a part of the inherited furniture of their minds, but they were antagonistic to the creation of an independent peasantry; they resented the subdivision of the soil which might sooner or later interfere possibly with the sacred rights of sport, and above all they cordially disliked the idea that any measure proceeding from a Liberal Government should prove a signal success. It was indeed the peculiar burden and handicap of rural Liberalism that a Liberal Government should pass excellent measures and then leave the execution of them in the hands of some of their most bitter and prejudiced opponents. It was the same all down the line, not only with respect to the Small Holdings Act, but as regards other measures. They had framed an admirable scheme of Army reform and proceeded to leave its machinery in the hands of lords-lieutenant and Tory landowners. It was suggested that the authorities in charge of the new Housing Act were to be district councils, which were in many instances simply Tory farmers' clubs. The success of the Licensing Bill depended largely on the sympathy and energy of the magistrates, and yet under this Government the claims of men with honourable and long records of public service had been deliberately ignored because apparently they happened to be Liberals. It was even suggested that the ethical *status* of applicants for old-age pensions should be determined by local committees of Tory employers. What, then, was the present position of county councils as regards the new Act? Some were more backward than others; but he would like to give some facts about his own county council of Oxfordshire, which was in its carrying out of the new Act well ahead of the majority. Some 11,000 acres had been applied for. By the middle of June the applicants would have been interviewed. The great majority of those applicants were, admittedly, men of sufficient capital, good character, and adequate experience and capacity. A list of farms over fifty acres was being made: notes had been taken of land which might possibly be available for hire or sale. One farm had been offered.

The agent was going to be sent round to see what land would be available. The interviewing of farmers and landowners would, he gathered, be delicate work, and land agents did not seem to be well disposed. It was, at any rate, absolutely certain that sufficient land could not possibly be acquired by voluntary methods to satisfy even a considerable fraction of the applicants. The average county council had no intention whatever, as far as he could judge, of giving notice to landowners or tenants this Michaelmas for the acquisition of any portions of their estate or farms, if they could possibly evade this responsibility. If land were required for a railway it would be acquired without compunction or delay, but the progress of the Small Holdings Act, a measure full of manifold possibilities for good, was to be delayed and hampered, forsooth, by the hostility of landowners and land agents! He hoped that hon. Members who represented country constituencies would seriously take to heart the full bearings of such an attitude as the one to which he alluded. It simply meant this—that if no notice for land were given this September no notice could be given until September, 1909, and no land could be acquired without compensation until September, 1910, *i.e.*, more than three years after the passing of the Act! What he wanted to know was this—why should these applicants wait indefinitely for their land? The words "a reasonable time" were used over and over again during the discussions on the Small Holdings Act. Did the county councils regard three years—with even then no certainty of securing land — as a "reasonable period?" He wished to point out that the villagers who applied for land were in earnest; that the acquisition of land was a matter of vital concern to them. He had held between forty and fifty meetings on this land question; he and his audiences had trudged and cycled through the dark and muddy lanes last autumn and winter, and in some cases more people had come together—men and women too—than during the fever and excitement of a general election. Young men had told him that but for a chance of getting some land they were determined to migrate to the towns or the Colonies. Were these men to wait from year to year whilst county councils played timidly with the Act—so that at the next election the local Tories could point with exultation to the fact that this much-lauded Liberal measure had furnished, say, one quarter of the applicants with land in three years? It was sometimes said that the electors held the remedy in their own hands if county councils refused to carry out the Act properly; that they could turn out these councillors and send back others. Those hon. Members who lived in Tory-ridden country districts recognised the futility of such a threat. It amounted to very little. The party opposite knew what they were about when they created county councils and refused to allow out-of-pocket expenses to the councillors when they attended the meetings. The result was, of course, that the number of persons who could, in practice, serve on county councils was very limited. Moreover, if a Liberal farmer stood for the county council against his landlord he was liable to be harried and persecuted. Even if one of their own class came forward as a strong Liberal he had frequently to submit to what was practically a social boycott. No, the remedy lay in prompt action by the Board of Agriculture. He ventured to suggest, with all respect, first of all, that a circular be at once sent to the county councils requesting information by the end of June as to the number of applicants, and the land actually available at the moment. A sub-commissioner could then be dispatched forthwith to give such notices as might be required for next Michaelmas. The time, in any case, was very short; but with energy and hard work much might be done before September. He would also like to see a further request from the Board, asking for the names and addresses of the men whose applications had been refused, and the reasons given for such refusal. He had heard of local magnates going about with land agents and settling off hand who were suitable persons to recommend and who were unsuitable. The refusals in question might or might not be sound and justifiable, but he felt that these cases should be known to the Board of Agriculture, and opportunity given to such unsuccessful applicants to bring forward a just grievance if they had one. A very sensible circular had, on May 26th, been dispatched from the Board, pointing out that fairly well-to-do applicants—blacksmiths, carriers, shopkeepers, and so on—should be afforded facilities for availing themselves of the Small Holdings Act. He would like to see the Board do its utmost also for the poorer applicants, the agricultural labourers, who would, he believed, develop into excellent small farmers if they got a good chance under the Act. And later on, could not the Board afford a little money for a few lecturers, who might go round the rural districts of England, and explain to the villagers the best methods of cultivation, sale of produce, co-operation, village banks, and so forth? An hon. Member opposite had asked for money grants towards the breeding of horses, but if money could be given to breed healthy horses, he thought some might be bestowed to breed healthy citizens, for that was what a successful carrying out of the Act would help to do. In summary, then, he earnestly begged the Board of Agriculture to carry out some such steps as those which he had ventured to suggest, for two reasons. First, for the sake of the villagers themselves. The agricultural labourers of England were, he thought, one of the most neglected classes of the King's subjects. They were poor men living in poor houses, and their poverty and the fact that they lived in scattered villages made anything like a trade union almost impossible. Their patience was amazing—their mental heritage from centuries of neglect and oppression—but it was not inexhaustible. If the admirable provisions of the Small Holdings Act were not adequately carried out, then the younger and more efficient men and women would continue to drift into the towns, while the older and less enterprising drifted back again into that social and political apathy from which they were aroused in 1906 by the dread menace of protection. And finally he asked the help of the Board for the credit of Liberalism. They were pledged up to the hilt to do their best for the humble, patient people in the country cottages; the Act had been described as the "Agricultural Labourers' Charter," and the late Prime Minister had with the utmost sincerity and hopefulness looked forward to a measure which should raise the "cloud of gloom" which had settled on many of our villages and enable the labourers to "call their souls their own." He had no desire to criticise unfairly the work of county councillors, and if, in his strong desire to see the Act made a living reality, he had spoken with undeserved harshness, he was sorry. He was aware that added responsibilities were placed upon the shoulders of the county councillors almost year by year, and, despite the limitations and prejudices—from his point of view—of so many of them, they accomplished a great deal of valuable public service without material reward. Nor on the other hand did he doubt for one moment the absolute sincerity of the gentlemen who served on the Board of Agriculture. He merely repeated with the utmost conviction that unless something was done and done promptly on the lines he had ventured to suggest, the Small Holdings Act ran a risk of being added to the discreditable list of those legislative futilities which had for years past in England masqueraded under the name of land reform.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said his hon. friend opposite had drawn a very rosy and attractive picture of the working of the Small Holdings Act. In reference to what he had said about local authorities, he wished to say that there were many county councils who held a very different view as to the success of the Act. Much of the Act was difficult to understand, and a good deal of the explanation was irrelevant. There was no body of men in England who were more anxious for the success of small holdings than the Worcestershire County Council, and they had had practical proof of that in times gone by. They would find the real opinion of that county council by noting their meetings with the labourers and their explanations of the difficulties connected with the circulars of the Board of Agriculture. The council were quite tired of the delays and expenses connected with the carrying out of the Act, and, what was more important still, the inevitably high rent which all those incidents created, and after taking all those things into consideration they were obliged to finish up by telling the labourers that after all their best chance of getting a small holding was under the Act of 1892. The hon. Member for Woodstock, like modern radicalism, had expressed in the strongest terms his disgust of local authorities. Personally, he did not think the Government could have placed the administration of the Act into other hands than those of the popularly-elected local authorities. Where these authorities did not satisfy hon. Members opposite, they were at once denounced, although they were elected upon the widest possible franchise. He was rather surprised at this new distrust of popular government which had been displayed on several occasions by hon. Members opposite. As for the remedies, the hon. Member suggested Board of Agriculture lecturers. In his opinion no lecturer could tell the agricultural labourer more about what he wanted or about small holdings than he already knew, and such expenditure would be a sheer waste of money. If that was all the hon. Member had to propose he did not think much of his remedy. One or two things had been elicited from the speech of the hon. Member for South Somerset. One was that no labourer who had no money had any chance of getting a small holding. That meant to say that men were to be deprived by the bar of poverty of that which they wanted, and which it was in the interest of the country or of agriculture that they should have. His hon. friend had told the Committee that there were 16,000 applications for 250,000 acres of land. What were they going to get? Up till now not a single scheme had received the approval of the Board of Agriculture by which these men would get small holdings. That was an unwarrantable delay, and was wholly condemnatory of the Act. The fact was that the labourers were at last getting disillusioned. The Bill was ushered into the House and passed as a great Party triumph, and statements of a vote-catching character were made about it. The Government were themselves to blame if those high expectations which were formed by the labourers had not been realised, because they encouraged those expectations without any examination as to whether or not they were likely to be realised. He was glad that the Board of Agriculture had agreed to let land to blacksmiths and men engaged in various other small industries, because those were the people who would be the first to avail themselves of it, and they were a most valuable class of cultivators. He was sorry to hear the hon. Member talk about an association which had been formed with a capital of about £10,000 to acquire land to be let to labourers. In his opinion that was encouraging middlemen and trading men to make a profit. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no."] In the Standing Committee a certain party tried to strike out that provision, but they were voted down on every occasion. There was nothing in the Act to prevent such an association making a profit of 20 per cent. out of the labourers. It should be borne in mind that the syndicate referred to would practically be supported by the money of the State, and whatever profit they made would have to be added to the rent of the agricultural labourers who took the land. He thought that was a monstrous proposal, and instead of tending to get people back on the land it would prove an expensive failure. He looked with pleasure at the small increase made in the Board of Agriculture grant. Nevertheless, he wished to remind the Committee that the total was the beggarly sum of £148,000, all told. There was something to be said for the proposition that agriculture for the good of the nation as well as of the farmer should receive better attention at the hands of the Government. In France, instead of £148,000, the sum of £1,750,000 was voted for agriculture every year. Denmark, with a population of 2,250,000 and a revenue under £5,000,000 all told, made an agricultural grant of £222,000. He had a letter from the Consul at Würtemberg which showed that in that little country they spent annually £72,000 for this purpose. He might also quote the cases of Austria, Germany, and the United States; the last-named voted annually £1,000,000 per annum to assist agriculture. The money grant in England was a test of the esteem, or rather the contempt, with which this Government, and every Government in the last fifty years, had treated the vital industry of agriculture. That state of things would continue, he believed, until the farmers and agriculturists assumed a more militant attitude, and determined to have the fair-play to which they were entitled. There was a small increase in the grant for agricultural education generally, but the grant was only about £12,300 all told. It was more apparent every year that if agriculture was to be successfully carried on under scientific conditions, teaching must be given. The sum granted at present for agricultural education was insignificant. France gave £152,000 a year for agricultural education, and it was difficult to say how much Gothenburg gave for the same purpose. There was a great establishment in Würtemburg, which he had visited several times. For the year in which he paid his last visit that little State gave to that one institution £9,000 for the purpose of making good the deficiency in connection with agricultural education. As to the distribution of the grant, he wished to point out that the Royal College of Agriculture at Cirencester was left absolutely out of account. No institution had a greater claim to consideration than that college. It was the pioneer of scientific agriculture at a time when Governments did not recognise their duty in regard to the giving of scientific agricultural education. That college had stood almost alone during the past sixty-three years in giving the education which was so much required. It had always had a splendid scientific staff, but he wanted to point out to his hon. friend how money was wasted. Other good colleges could give education for about £70, but the Royal College from lack of assistance was obliged to charge £100 or £120. The consequence was that a well-to-do man sent his son to a college where he could get practically the same education for £70 in order to save the difference between that sum and what he would have to pay at the Royal College. He asked his hon. friend to note that to that extent the grant was practically thrown away, or in other words placed in the pockets of rich men. In the debate last year his hon. friend promised that he would endeavour to make some working arrangement with the Board of Education so that the Board of Agriculture might work conjointly with them in regard to agricultural education. He would like to know whether he had done so. In France the presidents of the agricultural and the education departments worked together, and they issued joint reports. There was no doubt that our Board of Education stuck in the most obstinate manner to books and opposed everything in the form of practical education, to which a secondary place was given. If the hon. Gentleman could get some of the £20,000,000 which was spent on education and turn it into the channel of practical education so far as the rural districts were concerned, he would usefully employ a good deal of money which was now thrown away. A few months ago his hon. friend attended the International Dairy Conference at The Hague. Mr. Spear, a Scottish farmer, pointed out to him that there were 300 farms in Holland where animals were affected with foot-and-mouth disease. He wished to know whether his hon. friend had done anything to ascertain what was done with the produce of these animals which were suffering from foot-and-mouth disease—the worst of all animal diseases. What became, for instance, of their milk? It was not allowed to be sold in Holland. Did it come to this country in the form of milk, cheese, butter, or other products? That was a question which the Board of Agriculture ought to watch, because there was no question which affected the consuming public so closely. Last year the hon. Member for Cambridgeshire asked what steps the Government intended to take with regard to the Report made in 1905 by the Committee on fruit-growing. The hon. Gentleman gave no reply then. Would he reply now? The Committee was one of the strongest that could possibly have been formed. Fruit-growing was one of the most promising branches of agriculture; it was capable of any amount of development. The Report pointed out the almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of that development taking place under our present system. The Committee came to the unanimous conclusion that the ideal solution of the difficulties they had to deal with would be that the fruit growers should be the owners of the soil. Had the Board of Agriculture paid any attention to that Report? If not, he hoped that an assurance would be given that they would do so. He knew that was contrary to the principle of the Act which they discussed last year, but he had always maintained that it was the only principle on which small holdings could be successfully carried on. He congratulated the President of the Board of Agriculture upon his recognition of his duties under the Diseases of Animals Act, and upon his firmness in refusing to withdraw or modify the restrictions on imported live cattle. He hoped an assurance would be given that that policy would continue. No doubt the restrictions were injurious to certain sections and interests, but that was the inevitable effect of a policy which, by securing the safety of our flocks and herds, protected not only the farmers but the whole community. He appealed to hon. Members who were opposed to this policy to look at the question from the national point of view. Agricultural questions were not party questions. This was not a question of free trade or protection, except in so far as it meant protection against disease. Foot-and-mouth disease was the most contagious of all diseases which attacked animals. He remembered when many years ago it was rampant in England. At one time there were 750,000 animals affected by it, and there was terror throughout the land. The loss to the community was incalculable, and the case seemed hopeless. Thanks to legislation, but more particularly to the wise administration of successive Presidents of the Board of Agriculture, the disease had been practically stamped out and the country had a clean slate. They could not deal with this question except by prohibiting the importation of live cattle. Plausible attempts had been made, and probably they would be made again to-day, to show that live cattle might be imported from those countries which were officially reported to be free from foot-and-mouth disease. If that was conceded, good-bye to the immunity from the disease which this country at present enjoyed. In Europe foot-and-mouth disease always existed, and the Continent should be treated as one country, for the frontiers of the different nations afforded no guarantee whatever against the importation of the disease from one to another, and eventually to this country. With regard to other diseases, such as swine fever, sheep scab, and glanders, his hon. friend opposite in the debate last year pleaded want of funds. The Board of Agriculture was the Department from which they got more value received in the form of work than from any other Department of the Government in this country. They had a Veterinary Department up to the mark which could stamp out those diseases and put them practically in the position of foot-and-mouth disease, if only they were given a free hand and reasonable money support. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was a Member of the Board of Agriculture, would agree to that and take it to heart. It required stringent measures no doubt; but a parallel was to be found in the action taken by his right hon. friend the Member for South Dublin. That right hon. Gentleman took the strongest measures to deal with hydrophobia, although he was denounced by the so-called friends—the false friends—of dogs, and by numerous societies. The right hon. Gentleman was threatened with he knew not what pains and penalties, and immense pressure was brought to bear upon him. No doubt there were inconveniences; but the result of his right hon. friend's persistence and firmness was the stamping out of rabies, which was not only a good thing for the dogs, but who could tell how many hundreds of persons had escaped the most horrible death to which any human being could be subjected. Last year the hon. Member's plea was that there was no money, and he remembered that the hon. Gentleman urged private Members to bring pressure upon the Treasury. That was not the duty of private Members, but the duty of the President of the Board of Agriculture. He recognised a good many good things which the noble Lord had done—for instance, his dealing with Crown lands and other things, although he would like to have some report upon the result of such dealing. The hon. Member for Newmarket had been, he thought, unfairly criticised in regard to that matter. That by the way. The President of the Board of Agriculture had the responsibility for putting an end to the enormous loss to the nation which had been caused by diseases in stock throughout the country, and he recommended his noble friend, if he were unsuccessful in his appeal to the Treasury, to tender to the Prime Minister his resignation—[Ironical laughter]—he was not joking on this matter—and leave to someone who was not so easily satisfied the responsibility of continuing the work of stamping out these great removable national evils. If the noble Lord were to take that step it would be an object-lesson to the House and the country by which attention would be drawn to the vital importance of agriculture, an industry upon which, after all, we should have to depend for our strength and permanence and ultimate safety. Millions might be voted for the Army and Navy, but—let any man dispute the statement—they could not, through our neglect of agriculture for the past sixty years, carry on a war with a first class European Power for six months. If that were the time and place he could prove that to demonstration. He asked his Labour friends—[A Voice: They are not here.]—Well, they were all Labour Members. He never liked the term. At any rate, he represented 60,000 mostly labour men. [An Hon. Member: We are a nation of labourers.] He represented them all. If corn should at the outbreak of war go up to three or four times its present price—as it would do in a fortnight—and the day of starvation came, would the labouring men in the country allow their wives and families to starve? No; they would insist on a peace being made, no matter how disastrous and humiliating it might be. He ventured to say that if such a crisis happened—which Heaven grant it never should—England would descend from her present proud position to be a second-rate Power. Agriculture remained in exactly the same position, so far as money grants were concerned, as ever, notwithstanding our increased financial prosperity, and it would remain so until hon. Members, not only rural but urban Members, recognised that their prosperity depended largely on home production—more largely and more steadily than on foreign production. Until they saw that and insisted on a retracement of the steps taken for the past fifty or sixty years—and they would see it either willingly or by severe lessons—agriculture would remain the same unconsidered thing it was at the present time.

*Sir FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) said that the right hon. Gentleman always made interesting speeches, and there was much in what he had said which would have sympathy on that side of the House. At the same time, he thought the right hon. Gentleman had been unfair both to the Government and to the Act. He had spoken of the Small Holdings Act as an Act where no poor man need apply. The right hon. Gentleman had forgotten that this Act, for the first time, enlisted the great forces of co-operation and combination in the work of placing people on the land, and that that principle would have the effect of helping men to get land who might not have a farthing of capital. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken not without some reason of fruit-growers wishing to have the freehold of their land. He would remember that in Committee he (Sir Francis Channing) had voted with him in favour of that view on more than one occasion; land compulsorily acquired by county councils could not of course be sold, but he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Act embodied the Act of 1892, and county councils might acquire by agreement land and sell this land for small holdings for fruit-growers, if they thought it advisable. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the Act as likely to be a gloomy and disastrous failure, and that it would bring bitter disappointment to the labourers who might at first be attracted by it. He would ask how many labourers had obtained land under the Act of 1892.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS said that the reason why so few labourers had applied for land under the Act of 1892 was that they were required to pay down 20 per cent. of the purchase money, and a Bill to remove that disability had been strenuously opposed by the present Government.

*Sir FRANCIS CHANNING said that it would be out of order to discuss a Bill not now before the House; but no one could possibly deny that the Act of 1892 was an immense failure and that practically no people had been settled on the land under it.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he must really point out that all these remarks dealing with legislation were not in order.

*SIR FRANCIS CHANNING said that what he wished to urge was that the Act, the administration of which was one of the topics then before the Committee, was more calculated to place people on the land than any legislation which had been hitherto passed. He had himself placed a Notice on the Paper, not with the view of criticising in any hostile spirit the action of the Board of Agriculture, but to justify himself in urging one or two points of vital importance in regard to the administration of the Act. His hon. friend the Member for Somerset had made an exceedingly clear explanation of the administration of the Act so far as they had gone; but he had not stated what exactly had been done by the Commissioners on whose ability and qualifications he had dwelt, not without just satisfaction. Those Commissioners if they were to be of any use, ought to have something to do beyond applying "ginger" to the county councils, a policy with which he (Sir Francis Channing) had no sympathy whatever. He did not at all agree with the hon. Baronet in his references to certain provisions of the Act, which seemed to him of vital importance if any solid results were to be achieved by this legislation. Clauses 16 and 39 of the Act conferred very great powers, both on the Board of Agriculture and on the county councils, and he desired to urge most emphatically the necessity of the full and adequate use of those powers. Clause 39 gave very large powers to county councils to aid, encourage, and develop the creation of co-operative societies, either for the purpose of procuring land or to enable the smallholders to make a profit out of it when they had got it. It also gave to the Board of Agriculture the same powers with regard to co-operative efforts and operations as were given to county councils in those cases in which the Board of Agriculture stepped into the shoes of the county councils who failed to carry out their duties or used their powers under Section 16 of the Act. Section 16 enabled the Board of Agriculture—and the suggestion was one of the many valuable suggestions made by Lord Onslow, the Chairman of the Departmental Committee, with a view to demonstrate the feasibility of small holdings in any locality—to exercise all the powers of a county council, with the sole exception of the compulsory acquisition of land. The Board of Agriculture could acquire land by agreement, and exercise in respect of such land any of the powers of Clause 39. In other words if they thought fit the Board might develop a group of small holdings devoted to a particular branch of small cultivation suitable to the district, and work it as a model for all the surrounding districts. They had most extensive powers under Section 16. All the powers given to the county councils under this Act were extended to them, and therefore there was nothing to prevent the Board of Agriculture acquiring say from 500 or 1,000 acres of land in some agricultural area where they wished to demonstrate the most profitable type of small holdings devoted to one branch of small farming and the best methods of developing that branch to the highest standard. Besides that, these objects could be promoted by State money from the Small Holdings Account. That fund was available for the Board of Agriculture, not only for the purposes of meeting the losses made by county councils, not only for paying a proportion of the expenditure of county councils in respect to the procedure of the Act, but also for the purpose of initiating such experimental and model small holdings. The Small Holdings Account had had £100,000 paid into it for the expenses of the first quarter of the year, but the Commissioner of Works had told them in Committee that there was no limit to what Parliament might vote for it. He did not wish to labour the point, but he desired to protest against the attitude which the hon. Member for Somerset took up with regard to the use of these powers. The hon. Member said that these powers need not be used; that everybody knew small holdings were admirable things, and apparently the county councils were dealing very amply with the question of the provision of land; that the whole thing would take care of itself, and that the Board of Agriculture need not have pressed upon them the necessity of using these powers in any way whatsoever. But hon. Members knew perfectly well that the enormous pressure of local rates at the present time would check the action of county councils, and therefore the Committee had the right, if they wished to achieve that reorganisation of rural life and the regeneration of the rural population which they had dreamed of, if they really meant business, to say to the Government that they ought to use to the full the powers given under this Act for the development on scientific and commercial lines of those types of cultivation which were most likely to develop the prosperity of particular districts. He was not fond of revolutionary legislation or sweeping and drastic changes in connection with the land, but it seemed to him that if they meant business the sooner the Board realised that all powers given in the Act should be promptly, fully and decisively set in motion the better. It would be only too easy to delay, by hesitation, by lack of a bold constructive policy to reduce this Act to a mere flash in the pan like the Act of 1892. All the hon. Gentleman's statement was devoted to the question of the provision of land. So far, that had been the only function with which the Board of Agriculture had concerned itself in this matter. He did not agree with the criticisms of the hon. Member for Mid. Oxon with regard to the action of county councils. The county council of the county which he represented had carried out their inquiries in the most excellent way. They had found the applicants for land were capable and well fitted for the work; they had not dealt oppressively with regard to the question of the capital which was to be provided by the men, and they had inculcated at every turn the necessity of these men forming themselves into a co-operative society, both for the acquisition of land and for the more profitable working of its cultivation. He certainly could not complain of the county council of his own county, and he trusted that other county councils were adopting a similarly wise course in regard to the matter. The question resolved itself far more into a question of the men being able to make a living on the land when they got it than into a question of the provision of land. He had every confidence that land could be acquired by voluntary arrangement between the landowners and the county councils, but he certainly thought many of the agricultural labourers who were praised so highly, within limits, for their practical instincts as to dealing with the land did need practical and scientific training in the truer and wiser methods of attaining success in small holdings. It was quite true that here and there isolated small farmers working on ordinary agricultural lines might succeed, and that small holdings might be a great help as adjuncts to other employments. He did not at all agree that the supply of small holdings to a handful of pattern labourers, and to the village blacksmith, and persons of that kind was a sufficient justification for a drastic and sweeping Act like this. It would be mere fatuity to pass such an Act to help such small by-products of agriculture which could take care of themselves. What he wanted to see was the generous encouragement of large classes of men enthusiastically taking up some special branch of agriculture suited to their county, and developing it by means of scientific co-operation, and working on lines which would make the thing a commercial success. He himself was a member of the Agricultural Organisation Society, which was doing splendid work in educating the small holders. One of the most hopeful features of the present situation was that, he believed, the Board really intended to make a full use of the agency of this and similar societies in the development of agricultural co-operation. The true method of success was the power which he believed would be fully used to form agricultural co-operative societies. Denmark was the greatest demonstration of what could be effected by co-operation. It was true the Danes had started with special advantages. They had a magnificent system of rural high schools and of agricultural classes attached to those schools. They also had the great advantage of the subdivision of land into small areas, suitable for the development of small holdings. But what had built up the magnificent prosperity of a country with poor soil and a poor climate was the admirable development of co-operation all through. Not only did the business instincts of the people of Denmark teach them to combine and work these things on co-operative methods on their own account, but the

Government had throughout aided with State subventions the co-operative societies and aided the Central Societies which federated and supervised all the outlying societies. The whole thing was aided by substantial subsidies from the State, and, further, money was used to provide experts and spread the best methods of co-operation to raise the standards of stock and produce and to inculcate the best methods of agricultural work throughout the country. He did not want to see the Board of Agriculture supine on this point. He wished to see them not only fully using their powers under Section 16, but encouraging and developing in each district to which it was specially suitable some specialised branch of agriculture, it might be fruit farming or a poultry breeding and fattening or egg collecting station, or a creamery or bacon factory. Let them take any type they pleased, but let them get the men together into a co-operative society and proceed in a businesslike manner. It was not a question of a fight between class and class for acres of land, but a question of helping the people to get a living out of the land, to build up a better and happier range of opportunities and to open up greater prospects of prosperity. He was sorry the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not present, because he wished to call attention to the inadequate amount voted for agricultural education, the sum of £12,300, which was handed over to be dispensed by the Board of Agriculture to the agricultural colleges and schools of the country. He did not know whether hon. Members had gone into this matter; he had paid a good deal of attention to it himself. It seemed to him to be a great scandal to a country like ours that so small a sum should be devoted to this great purpose; and he dwelt upon this matter, not only because the amount was small, but because, small though it was, it was not even applied in the right direction. The greater proportion of the agricultural colleges of the country were admirable institutions, and the staffs and the teaching were excellent, but the number of students in those colleges was ludicrously small in proportion to the staffs. Why was that? It was because we had practically no rural high schools for agriculture in the whole country to supply students for the colleges. On this point he had not only examined the Reports of the Board of Agriculture and the Board of Education, but had obtained the latest information from the officials and he found that there were still at the present time only three practical farm schools or farm institutes in the country—one at Basing, Hampshire; one at Ridgmont, Bedfordshire; and Penrith School in Westmoreland—for the provision of that practical instruction with which alone they could hope to make small holdings successful and so develop the future of the rural community of this country. They had considered this question in the Small Holdings Committee and the whole question of agricultural education had since then been before another Departmental Committee. He had hoped that before this debate was reached they would have had the Report of that Committee before them, because they would probably not have another opportunity of discussion on these subjects, at any rate in the present portion of the session. He wished to impress upon the representative of the Board of Agriculture—he was sorry the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in his place—the urgent necessity, when that Report came out, of really taking up the matter in a bold and determined spirit, in order to do justice to the agricultural population, and to increase those educational facilities which were to be found in the United States, Canada, France, Denmark, and all over the world except here. This country had a fertile soil and an industrious population, and the agricultural community were entitled to the best educational equipment of this kind which could be afforded. If the sum of £12,300 were multiplied ten-fold and expended on agricultural education, it would be money well spent. The agricultural colleges and rural high schools in Canada, provided by the munificence of Sir William Macdonald, and superintended by his friend Professor Robertson, did splendid and useful work. Anybody who cared about the future of agriculture in this country would wish to see something of the kind provided in England. He, therefore, urged the Board of Agriculture when the Departmental Committee reported, and he hoped they would make decisive recommendations to impress upon the Treasury and the Government the absolute necessity of devoting more money to this useful educational work. They knew very well that this matter could not be dealt with adequately by county councils out of their ordinary resources. What they wanted was a bold application of national money for the development of agriculture, which was a great national interest. He was once concerned in a company for the establishment of high schools for girls, and he did not see why a company should not be formed for the building, endowing, and equipping of a number of rural high schools in suitable districts all over the country. If such a company were formed, he did not see why it should not be subsidised by the Government. He was sure that many landowners would gladly join such a movement for the promotion of agricultural education in this country. They wanted to make this rural revival a real success, and that could only be done by commercial and scientific organisation. He hoped, therefore, that the Board of Agriculture would make the fullest use of their powers under Section 16 of the Act, and so add to the development and prosperity of the agricultural community.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he did not propose to touch at any length on the question of small holdings, but he desired to refer to the remarks of the hon. Baronet in introducing the Vote. On the subject of the position of the Board of Agriculture to spend any or all of the sum of £100,000, the hon. Baronet had declared that it was unnecessary, because it was clearly feasible to establish small holdings, and it would be waste of money to spend large sums in demonstrating a feasibility already admitted. The hon. Gentleman said that the county councils were working the Act well, and that so long as they continued to do so, there was no need for the expenditure. The hon. Baronet, however, had missed the point. The point was not whether it was feasible or not to establish small holdings, but how they were to be cultivated so as to make them pay. That was where the expenditure of £100,000 would have come in most usefully. If the Government, with the £100,000, would undertake experiments in intensive cultivation on small holdings, it would be of the utmost importance. It would enable, he was convinced, many small holders with little capital to decide wisely on the methods of cultivation they were going to employ, and give them that information which, otherwise, they could only acquire for themselves by going through the adversity of failure in many experiments before they hit the right one. He considered, in view of the fact that the Board of Agriculture was so starved financially, getting only a miserable £140,000 a year, that it was most reprehensible on the part of the President of the Board of Agriculture to have failed to spend this large sum of £100,000, a sum nearly equal to the total annual grant of the Board, on these experiments which might be so useful in the future. But he wanted to pass to a number of subjects and to draw to them the attention of the Board on behalf of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture. The first had reference to glanders, as to which the Board had again and again been urged by the Chamber of Agriculture to give more thorough compensation for horses slaughtered. Although it would cost a little more for a few years it would be economical in the long run, because it would tend to stamp out the disease more quickly. The answer to this proposal was, of course, that the Board had not the money, but he thought, if the President of the Board really took a strong stand and urged upon the Treasury not only the importance of the subject, but that the ultimate effect would be an economy, the £25,000 or so required would be provided. Over £40,000 a year was spent now under the Diseases of Animals Act, and, if that sum were slightly increased for a few years, he was convinced it would enable the Board very largely to reduce disease and consequently expenditure in the future. The next point he wished to touch upon was the administration of the Dogs Act. The Board was in an unfortunate position with regard to that Act, and could not bring about the adoption of the Act in those counties where there had been a refusal to adopt it, with the result that the evil which the Act was intended to remedy was still going on in many places. He hoped that the hon. Baronet would be able to hold out some hope that this difficulty would be removed, and that the Act would become general in its application instead of only local, according to the will of the local authority. It frequently happened that even in an agricultural county the majority of the county council was composed of urban representatives, and he supposed it was more or less natural that the urban areas should resist the application of the Act, because the people residing in towns resisted restrictions being placed upon their dogs, and were not inclined to consider the hardships they were thereby imposing on their rural neighbours. This matter was one of very great importance. It was certainly one which agriculturists were taking seriously to heart, and he urged upon the hon. Baronet the need of a remedy. Another small point which he desired the hon. Baronet to take note of, and which he was sure the hon. Gentleman would be willing to remedy if he could, had reference to the unfortunate and serious delay in many cases in the publication of the Reports of the various Departments. The Report of the Intelligence Department for 1906 was not published till this year. What was the good of an Intelligence Report published two years late? Its value was entirely lost. He really thought it must be within the power of the President to have these Reports issued with sufficient promptitude. It was quite certain that they ought to be available before the House was asked to pass the Vote for the Board of Agriculture. The Report for 1907 would probably not be available until next year, and yet they were asked to vote £140,000 without the least idea what the Department was doing during the past year. He wished to ask the Board seriously to take in hand a careful and scientific study of the habits of a number of birds. There were a great many familiar birds which they all knew to be destructive, but what the ordinary individual did not know was whether they did any compensating good, and whether the balance was in favour of the harm or of the good, so that they could decide whether the birds should be destroyed or carefully preserved. There was the black-headed gull, and some tits and finches, all of which did a certain amount of harm, but which might do compensating good, and it was of the utmost importance to agriculturists to understand thoroughly whether it was to their advantage to destroy them or not. There had been a very serious failure to carry out the obligations placed on the Board by the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act. So far as he could see the Act was doing no good at all to the agriculturist, because it had not been administered as Parliament intended. A good deal of objection was raised during the passing of the Act to a clause which required the consent of the Board of Agriculture before prosecutions could be undertaken. The reply was that the Board would never place stumbling blocks in the way of prosecutions, but he had a report from one county in which a number of cases were sent up during last year with requests for permission to prosecute, and not a single permission was given by the Board until this year. He hoped if the Board continued to exercise this right of refusing or permitting a prosecution they would take care that no unreasonable delay took place, and that the punishment that ought to fit the crime might follow promptly. Another point which should be dealt with was this. When publication was made of the analysis of samples taken under the Act, the failure of the sample to come up to the guarantee was shown, but no name was allowed to be published. Surely if traders supplying under guarantee were defrauding the agricultural community on a wholesale scale, it would be to the advantage of the whole community that their names should be published, and agriculturists enabled to avoid dealing with them. By that means a higher standard of rectitude would certainly be set up in this branch of trade, and it would be for the ultimate good of the trade itself as well as of the farmer. As it was, it looked as if the Board had been too much influenced by the approaches which had, no doubt, been made to them by the trade, and owing to these representations had refrained from carrying out to the full the powers which Parliament had placed in their hands. Next he wished to call attention to the question of the warble-fly. There was great ignorance and misconception with regard to the action of this pest, and as to the best method of combating it. The Irish Department of Agriculture had quite recently published a very useful little handbook on the subject. He wanted to urge on the hon. Baronet that the Board of Agriculture should either reproduce that pamphlet, or at all events promptly publish something which would prevent the waste of large sums of money in useless remedies, and enable effective steps to be taken against the ravages of this pest. It used to be stated, by the Board, and even by great authorities like Miss Ormerod, that the best remedy was to cover the backs of cattle with a horrible mixture including train oil, but the authorities were now satisfied that that was quite devoid of effect and in many cases did serious harm to the hide of the animal. The result of the investigation by the Irish Department was that these old-fashioned remedies were useless, and that the maggot of this fly entered the animal through the skin and not through the mouth, and that it was the maggot and not the fly itself that perforated the skin. It used to be supposed that the fly laid its eggs in the skin, but that was not so. The time for applying the remedy was not in the summer, but in the winter months, when the maggot was actively at work boring through the skin of the unfortunate animal. A good deal of attention had been drawn at different times to the question of grazing male animals on common lands, and the Central Chamber of Agriculture as late as January last had forwarded a resolution to the Government on the subject. There was no doubt that great inconvenience frequently occurred from the freedom of commoners to graze undesirable animals on common land. He believed it was within the power of the Board of Agriculture to restrict these powers, and if not, he would urge them to obtain that power by legislation as soon as possible. It was not a subject which could be dismissed lightly as being unimportant. The cases of inconvenience which were reported might not be very numerous, but they should be prevented altogether, and the use of the commons should be restricted to reasonable use by such animals as could reasonably and suitably graze there. The hon. Baronet had made a lengthy statement on the subject of the new Swine Fever Order. He wished he could share the satisfaction which he had expressed, but which he was confident he did not feel, as to the efficacy of the new Order. He believed they were simply a concession to certain swine-breeders, butchers, and so on, who had grievances against the old Order. It was admitted that grievances did exist, but there must result individual cases of hardship in stamping out a disease, and it would be a great mistake to make concessions to individuals and thus jeopardise the interests of the community. That was what the Board were doing by their action. They were exposing the swine of the country to a greatly increased risk. It was really in the interests of all concerned that drastic measures should be taken to stamp out the disease, and agriculturists were willing to put up with a certain amount of individual inconvenience in order that that end might be achieved. He urged that a Departmental Committee should be set up, concurrently with the new Order, to go into the whole question *de novo* as he was convinced that this disease was being treated on entirely wrong lines. He thought the Board of Agriculture ought to exercise common sense and sound judgment in this matter, and stamp out with vigorous measures this disease as they stamped out cattle plague and other diseases. He next wished to refer to the new Sheep Dipping Order. With regard to the part of the Order fixing the date at which the dipping season ended, a great many flock-owners might be compelled to rush their dipping through in the middle of the harvest time, and if some slight alteration could be made it might relieve a great many who would otherwise be greatly inconvenienced. As for the condition imposed by the Order that after dipping the dipped sheep should be kept from contact with the undipped sheep, that would create great difficulties in the case of ewes and lambs, and it might frequently turn out to be impossible to carry out the Order on this point.

In this respect he thought it would be wise to insert a saving clause. He knew they could rely upon the hon. Baronet to see that no great hardship in this particular matter was inflicted. In conclusion, he wished to say a word or two about the *status* of the Board of Agriculture. He did not care very much what the salary of present or future Presidents was. But he knew that there was some likelihood of the *status* of the Board of Trade and of the Local Government Board being raised, and that would place the Board of Agriculture relatively in a much worse position than it was at the present time, because they would then get all the worst men. He understood that if the salaries of the Presidents of any of those Departments were raised every class in that Department would also get a better salary, and if the Board of Agriculture was left out the agricultural interests would be left in the hands of those who could not command the better-paid jobs in the two other Departments he had mentioned. It had been said that it would be ridiculous to ask that the same salary should be paid to the President of the Board of Agriculture as to the President of the Board of Trade and the President of the Local Government Board, because the relative importance of agriculture was infinitesimal as compared with the work of those other Departments. The work of the Board of Agriculture was insignificant because Parliament had recently treated it as such. As a matter of fact, agriculture was the most important industry of all, and a greater proportion of the population were dependent upon it than upon any other industry. Steps ought to be taken at once to treat it in the way such an important industry deserved to be treated. He hoped the hon. Baronet and hon. Members opposite would do their best to see that the Board of Agriculture was not left out in the cold when any movement for increasing the *status* of the various Departments was taking place, and that it would receive equal treatment with the two other Boards he had mentioned. As to the appointment of a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture he was sure that the hon. Baronet would agree that his own position was a difficult and very undesirable one, because he had to represent the Board of Agriculture whilst he was not in any way connected with it. During the last Parliament the hon. Baronet himself vigorously raised this point, and stated that when the President of the Board of Agriculture sat in another place there ought to be a proper Parliamentary Secretary in this House. In his opinion whichever House the President of the Board of Agriculture was in there should be a Parliamentary Secretary in the other House. It was unsatisfactory to all parties that there should be no Parliamentary Secretary and no regular official in this House. He trusted that this matter would be taken in hand, and that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not raise any difficulties in the matter, which would probably only involve the expenditure of about £2,000 a year. He apologised to the House for raising so many dry subjects, but the interests of agriculture were his first consideration, and he hoped the points he had raised would receive the attention they deserved from the hon. Baronet.

*MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) said he desired to refer to his own experience as a member of a sub-committee of the county council of his own county. That committee interviewed some forty or fifty applicants under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act; those applicants were almost all of them men of experience, many of them being labourers employed on the land; some of them were of the richer class, and there was hardly one who did not afford them ocular demonstration of the good will and determination they had to do their best by the land. The committee he referred to included a well-known Conservative, and they all felt that these men deserved the best consideration of the county council, that they were men who ought to have the land, and would do well by it if they got it. It was extremely disappointing to some of them to think that many of those applicants would not get the land for a very long time. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the

Member for Bordesley when he declaimed against undue delay. If they discouraged men by putting them off in this way they would have a disbelief in the honesty of the intentions of Parliament, and the efficacy of the law on this question. He had gone into many a village during last winter describing the object of this Act, the benefits it would bestow, and its advantages to the country generally and to the labourers in particular, but he always said that they must beware of supposing that they could create land. They all knew that there was only a certain amount of land to deal with. Those on the land at the present moment were very loth to part with it even for public purposes. He had no remedy to offer for this state of things, but he thought, nevertheless, that they should do their best to give the Act the fullest fulfilment. There were many landlords who looked at this matter in the way he did, and many county councils were ready to do all they could in the matter. At any rate there were many county councillors, if not county councils, who were just as keen as any hon. Member of the House to see that the Act was put into force. One remark made by the right hon. Member for Bordesley had very much astonished him. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that if lecturers went about the country it would be merely wasting money because the agricultural labourers did not want them. He only wished the right hon. Gentleman had accompanied him to a village in North Bucks where a gentleman lectured who had devoted a large part of his life to lecturing upon agricultural organisation. This gentleman did not lecture on farming, but on co-operation and organisation, and he would remind the right hon. Member for Bordesley that his own Bill of 1892 included co-operation.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS said he was in favour of lectures on co-operation. His objection was to the suggestion that lecturers should be employed to explain this Act.

*Mr. VERNEY said he happened to be one of those lecturers himself. He was afraid that he did not himself thoroughly understand the Act, and therefore he was not surprised that the labourers did not. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman in the appeal he made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and to the President of the Board of Agriculture to give them more practical assistance in regard to the agricultural industry. It meant the giving to agricultural labourers opportunities of the same kind as were now given so fully to artisans in connection with polytechnic instruction. Why should not the county councils offer scholarships in agriculture? Why should not something more practical be done for agricultural education than was done at the present time? He hoped something would be done by the present Government to put in force the excellent principles which the right hon. Gentleman had advocated in regard to education. Teachers were wanted for that work. He wondered whether the right hon. Gentleman would tell the House that there was now a sufficient supply of fully qualified teachers in agriculture. He himself very much doubted whether there were, and proper teaching in regard to agricultural matters could not be got unless the teachers were themselves properly taught. There were hundreds of young teachers who were willing to learn, but except during their vacation they had little time or opportunity to get the necessary instruction. There were now springing up in the country some institutions where they could get that instruction. In this country a miserable pittance was given for agriculture as compared with the amounts given by countries far less rich. Agriculture should in future be made a far more important branch of study for teachers in agricultural schools. If that were done, agriculture would be taught properly and practically throughout the country. He had heard farmers jeer at the kind of teaching given in the past, and he was afraid that many of them regarded it as mere parrot teaching given by teachers who had very little of the practical knowledge which was so highly important in this matter. He agreed with what had been said in regard to the desirability of co-operation on the part of the great Departments. The permanent officials in all the Government Departments concerned in agriculture should be ready to work together without jealousy or misunderstanding, so that the money voted by Parliament should be spent in the best possible way. He wished that the Board of Education and the Board of Agriculture were much more closely united in the matter of agricultural education. It would be immensely to the advantage of the country if the permanent officials of both of these great Departments were constantly conferring with each other as to the best way of spending the money voted for this purpose. He believed a great deal would be done in that matter if the Board of Agriculture felt that they had public opinion behind them. He understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had strong sympathies in favour of agriculture. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman might have every opportunity of exercising his sympathies. In regard to glanders he had been informed that there had been an application for an increased grant in order to stamp out the disease. Those who understood these matters told him that glanders was a disease which might be entirely stamped out if adequate means were brought to bear upon it. It seemed to him that the question of dealing with the diseases of animals was a national and not a local one. Last year the Prime Minister, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, received a deputation in regard to compensation for animals slaughtered, and he was reported to have said that, after all, that was a matter which was met by the local authorities and that it was a local matter. He strongly dissented from that conclusion. He believed that if the farmers of the country were consulted they would admit that it was a matter of national concern. Diseases knew no parish or county bounds, and if dangerous diseases existed in the country and were not dealt with promptly and stringently, the result of the laxity might be not local but national in the truest sense of the word. He asked the Prime Minister whether he could not modify the opinion he expressed last year and treat this as a matter of national concern. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be able to grant the comparatively minute financial help necessary to deal with these diseases on a national basis. He was told that last week there were eleven outbreaks of glanders. Last year for the twenty-three weeks ending 6th June there were 420. Fortunately there had been a diminution this year, the number up to date being 360. The reason for that was more accidental than scientific. He ventured to think that if science were brought in, and if the country at large took the matter in hand and insisted on a grant being given for the stamping out of that and other diseases of a similar kind, they would be able to congratulate themselves upon the entire disappearance from the country of a disease which wrecked and ruined hundreds of farmers, and rendered their business unnecessarily risky. There were risks Nature imposed on farmers which could not be touched, but there were risks which science could prevent. He claimed that Government should incur the expenditure necessary to reduce the preventible risks to a minimum.

MR. CHAPLIN supported the appeal which had just been made to the Prime Minister, and said he did not think the hon. Member had overrated the importance of certain diseases being treated as subjects of national concern. He agreed with the suggestion that efforts should be made to provide practical agricultural education for agricultural labourers and others, especially in view of the fact that an attempt had been made by Parliament, with what success remained to be seen, to provide a vast number of those people with small holdings. He concurred also in pressing upon the Government that the time had come when a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture should be appointed. They had succeeded in eliciting from the hon. Member who represented the Board of Agriculture that, if he understood him rightly, although there had been 16,000 applicants, under the Act of last session, for 250,000 acres of land, no land had yet been provided.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said the right hon. Gentleman was wrong in saying that no land had been provided in the sense that schemes had not been approved by the Board. Schemes had been approved for Somerset, Radnorshire, Gloucestershire, Warwick, and the Isle of Wight. He intended to give the Committee full details in regard to this matter latter on.

MR. CHAPLIN said he was glad to have that information, which he did not think had been previously understood by the Committee. He regretted that the vote had been put down for that day, because several of his hon. friends were unable to be present and take part in the discussion of the question of horse breeding in the country, which was a matter of most serious national importance. In regard to this matter he found himself in a position of some little difficulty, because, though nothing in the world would be easier for him as a member of the Royal Commission on Horse Breeding than to give a complete vindication of the work done by that body under great difficulty and with wholly inadequate means during a number of years, he understood from the ruling of the Chairman that unless he did so as an illustration of the methods that might be adopted by other Departments, he would be precluded from discussing the Report of that Commission. The question raised by his hon. friend was of the greatest and most serious national importance, and he hoped he would be successful—at least he would do his best—in using the information contained in that Report without transgressing in any way the Chairman's ruling. The hon. Member was no doubt perfectly right in saying that there were grounds of complaint—and very considerable grounds—for the present position of the horse breeding industry in this country. He thought there was equally little doubt amongst all those who had given any attention to the subject that the present horse supply for the purposes of this country was inadequate and unsatisfactory in the extreme. It was equally true that, recognising the importance of this question, the President of the Board of Agriculture summoned a conference of many of those who, as he described them, were well acquainted with the subject. The conference was held at the Board of Agriculture, and a general discussion took place with the object of arriving at some scheme which might be adopted with advantage for the purpose of remedying the evil complained of. Now, if it was admitted that the present position was wholly unsatisfactory, as he believed it undoubtedly was, the first thing to do was to diagnose accurately the causes of the difficulty in which they were placed; and at that conference a scheme, practically complete in his judgment, was submitted by a member of the Royal Commission with the view of rehabilitating as far as possible the breed of horses in this country. The gentleman began by pointing out what were the causes which lay at the very root of the whole difficulty. These were perfectly simple. It was pointed out by the Royal Commission within a year after their appointment what was going on and what were the causes of the deterioration in the breed of our horses which was the subject of great and even general complaint. What the Commission said was—

> "Private enterprise was formerly sufficient to produce and to maintain a breed of horses in this country which was unrivalled in the world; and that pre-eminence was successfully maintained until the Governments of foreign countries became alive to the importance of acquiring an equal advantage for themselves."

These foreign Governments and also America proceeded to establish haras and sent agents here to purchase horses. No doubt the result was that this country and Ireland were swept of the best stallions and mares for the purposes of general utility and for breeding military remounts. These foreign agents were competing with public money against private enterprise in this country, and the natural result was they bought animals of both kinds at prices with which it was quite impossible for private enterprise successfully to compete. The Commission went on to say—

> "The consequence of this has been that with the exception of the highest class of stallions and mares for the breeding of racehorses——"

these could still be retained in this country, because it was no uncommon thing for individuals to give as much as £30,000, and even more, for stallions and brood mares for breeding racehorses in order to compete for the great prizes given in so many races now—

> "this country has been left, for the most part, with the inferior and often unsound

animals, which the foreign agent has rejected, and the result has been a gradual but marked deterioration in the general breed, for which England, at one time, was famous."

He could say from his own observation over a vast number of years that he absolutely and entirely concurred in that statement. The Commission went on to say—

> "Your Commissioners have, therefore, considered, in the first place, as the most effectual means of dealing with this evil, whether it was possible for them, by the formation of a haras for stallions, to retain the most valuable animals, which at present leave the country, for the service and the use of the breeders of horses in the United Kingdom."

But the Commissioners were confronted with this difficulty from the outset. The funds at their disposal were hopelessly inadequate—something less than £5,000 a year. The Commissioners were, therefore, obliged to adopt less ambitious means. With the funds at their disposal he contended that they had been singularly successful in what was the main duty entrusted to them by the terms of reference, viz., the encouragement and maintenance of the breed of sound horses. That object was accomplished by a system of premiums for stallions which, he ventured to say under whatever Department the charge of horse-breeding might remain in this country, in future ought to be maintained. As a result of offering premiums for stallions, since 1887 down to 1907 there had been produced 14,250 foals, or an average of 783 a year. That was most remarkable, and showed that the Royal Commission was not deserving of all the abuse that had been heaped upon it. Then these 783 foals had been extraordinarily successful in winning premiums at agricultural shows. In the year 1907 no less than 489 foals, the produce of premiated stallions, had won prizes of which ninety-six were medals, at shows in fifty-two different counties. He thought that those entrusted with the charge of not more than £4,500 for the purpose of improving the breed of sound horses in the United Kingdom need not be altogether ashamed of that result. He would now go on to describe the scheme which was submitted to the Board of Agriculture. It would be found on page 8. The scheme referred entirely to the proposition that if the breeding of horses in the United Kingdom was to be restored to anything approaching its former excellence, it was absolutely imperative that the best horses and best mares of the class required to breed animals for purposes of general utility, which at present were bought by foreign Governments for use in foreign countries, should be retained in the United Kingdom. That was and must be the foundation of any reform whatsoever in this country on this subject. With regard to the horses in this country, it was proposed that the Government itself should find the means for the purchase, at all events, of the pick of these animals and keep them for the use of people in this country. If they did not, these horses would continue to go abroad as they did day by day at the present time. It was then proposed that when the horses had been secured, they should be kept at convenient depots, and in the proper season should be sent down into various districts and travel the country as country stallions travelled now, the rule to prevail being that the horses should go to the mares and not the mares to the horses. In this way with good management all these horses would be practically self-supporting, and the expense of acquiring them could never be considerable in any one year, because the class of horses to which he referred —horses too slow for racing, but with great bone and good action—were few. Only five or six of them were bred each year, but when they were bred they went abroad season after season. Those were the animals that must be retained in this country. Then there was the question of the brood mares. At this moment there was in this country a society called the Brood Mare Society. It was composed of a number of gentlemen who were working remarkably well with most limited means, and the Government could not do better than take advantage of that society and call it to their aid and assistance, or subsidise it with funds, and by that means make a great step in the direction of getting the proper class of mares in the country. But, if they succeeded in getting the proper horses and mares, there was still another thing to be done. They had to induce the breeders of the country to make use of them. On that point he had always held that the best thing that could be done was to hold out to the breeders the possibility of a quick return, and that hope could be held out at all times by good prizes being given at all the shows. By such means little difficulty would be found in inducing farmers and others who had given up breeding to revert to their old practice. Then there remained the question of machinery and the funds by which that machinery would be worked. The Commission was most moderate in its suggestion. The Commission only suggested an increase of £25,000 a year for the purpose of restoring the breed to something like its former position of excellence. That would put a sum of £30,000 a year altogether at their disposal, £10,000 to be devoted to horses, £10,000 to mares, and the remaining £10,000 for the encouragement of breeders and the costs of administration. He believed, if something of that nature were adopted, in the course of a very few years there would be a very material improvement. Of course, the attention of the Royal Commission was chiefly directed to improving the quality of the breed, but at the present moment quantity was perhaps almost more important. That was a question, however, more perhaps for the War Office than any other Department. They must know best what their requirements were, and what they were likely to be in the future. If they wanted to increase very largely the quantity of horses and increase them at a time when there were so many reasons for the decrease of horse-breeding —new methods of travel and modes of movement in these days of motors and trams and things of that kind—he was quite sure very serious steps must be taken by the Government to keep up the number of horses in this country to anything like approaching the needs and requirements of military purposes alone. He was not sure if there was to be any change in the Departments in this matter, but it would be perhaps better in the hands of the War Office than in a Department which was not so great an authority —for this reason, that the War Office would be more likely to obtain the means and funds necessary for the purpose than a smaller Department of State. Then, of course, arose the question of machinery, and the features by which horse-breeding should be guided. It was not for him to say what that machinery should be, but speaking for the Royal Commission he could only say that under cicumstances of great discouragement and with little help of funds, which from the outset had been absolutely and completely inadequate, they had done the best work possible in the direction he had indicated, namely, in the increased soundness of the animals. They had done what they had to do in that direction with remarkable and signal success, and they would be willing if supported by adequate means to continue the work which they had voluntarily undertaken for a great number of years. But one thing was absolutely certain—without large additional funds supplied by the Government nothing effectual or sufficiently effectual could be done in the direction of improving or increasing the breed of horses in this country. No one regretted more than himself that the proposed meeting with the Board of Agriculture had not taken place, but the fault did not lay with the Royal Commission. He could not do better than quote the last two paragraphs of the Report, which would show how strongly they felt, and continued to feel, on this question. They said—

> "Seventeen months have now elapsed since the suggestions in Lord Sefton's letter in November, 1906, were submitted on behalf of this Commission to the President of the Board of Agriculture, but we are still left in this country without the aid and encouragement for the horse-breeding industry which is so urgently needed, though we believe it to be vital to its future well-being and prosperity. The main causes of the trouble are still in operation. The best of our sires and mares, which are so greatly needed for our own requirements, continue steadily to leave the country, purchased by foreign Governments to improve the breed of horses in foreign countries. No efforts on the part of this Commission to assist the industry, unless they are provided with further means, can effectually help it, and it becomes our duty once again to urge with all the force we can that the difficulties which confront an interest of so much importance to the welfare and even the safety of the nation are increasing every year, and with every day's delay in dealing with the question they will continue to increase more seriously in the future."

He hoped these words of warning would arrest the attention of the Government before it was too late.

*MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley) said he desired with some reservations to support most cordially the protest made earlier in the debate by his hon. friend the Member for Mid Oxfordshire with regard to the apparent inactivity of the Small Holdings Commission. He represented a county which was paramount among all the rural counties in the welcome it had given to the Small Holdings Act, and in the number of substantial applications which it had made for land in the county. Up to the present, very little encouragement had been given in the matter. He had in mind a little village which he had visited only that day with some 700 inhabitants, where applications had been made for no less than 300 acres for small holdings last year. From then to now no meeting had been called, they had seen no one, and no step had been taken to provide the holdings. In another village of his constituency, the only sign they had of the working of the Act was that land had been offered to the county council, but they had not decided to take it, no reason being given. He did not want to blame the county councils in this matter. He believed that in this instance the county councils were doing their best to carry the Act into operation. Undoubtedly the number of applications had been entirely unexpected; no one had really foreseen what the success of the Act would be. The county councils had to sift the applications; they had to create their machinery; they had, no doubt, delicate work to do in negotiating for the land. At the same time, one must look at it from the point of view of the men who had put in their applications, and were waiting. They had been waiting anxiously for twenty years in the hope of an Act of this kind being passed, and they were now receiving, he did not hesitate to say, every sort of indirect discouragement. They were being disappointed, and were in great uncertainty as to what the future was going to be. What he wanted to know was what the Small Holdings Commissioners had been about all this time. If the county councils had been working hard, had they been receiving assistance from the Government in addition, so that the Act might be carried out? Had the Commissioners yet visited any place in the county of Oxford? He would be glad of a specific answer on that point. It seemed to him that the Small Holdings Commissioners might do a useful work merely by communicating with some of the applicants themselves, and giving them the assurance that they meant to see that those applicants got the land for which they had applied. There was no time to be lost. If the Government meant to see that the Act was a reality they ought to make sure that the land was taken and that notice was given to the sitting tenants before 29th September next. If that date were passed, and they had not obtained a great part of the land before, then another year would go by and further discouragement would be caused. The applicants would again drop off, and something of the same sort would happen as occurred after the passing of the Act of 1892. Therefore, he urged upon the Government not to wait until the county councils were actually in default, but to take steps now to see that as far as possible the Act was carried out.

*MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said the hon. Member had spoken in rather strong terms of the way in which the county councils were administering the Act.

MR. MORRELL: I did not. I expressly stated that I thought the county councils were doing their best.

*MR. BRIDGEMAN said that if that were so, he did not quite understand why it should be necessary to put pressure on them. At any rate, he was sorry if he had misunderstood the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Mid. Oxfordshire had made a violent attack upon the county councils. He had told them that, without taking their election pledges too seriously, he and his friends had fulfilled what they believed to be their undertaking by putting on the Statute-book a measure for small holdings; that, whether its provisions were wise or unwise, they had done all that could be expected of them, and it must be somebody else's fault and not theirs if it did not turn out all that it should be. That he thought was the hon. Member's line of argument. The hon.

Gentleman had gone on to say that the county councils were opposed to an independent peasantry. Anybody who had read the Act, and knew anything about it, was aware that, whatever the desire of the county council might or might not be with regard to an independent peasantry, it was the supporters of the Government who objected to every attempt to introduce purchase into the measure. It seemed to him that they entirely forgot the position of the people who had to be turned off the land in order that it might be occupied by smallholders. Nobody wished more than he to increase the number of smallholdings, but it was quite impossible to do so in the summary way suggested in the speeches of the hon. Members for the Woodstock and Henley divisions of Oxfordshire, who seemed to think that they could take the land at once without giving notice. If that were not so, he did not quite see the point of all their argument in favour of carrying out the Act more rapidly. They must give proper notice. The county councils had only just begun to work. They were perpetually having Treasury Minutes and circulars from the Board of Agriculture—circulars which had been sent some time after the passing of the Act—and they were doing their very best (he did not know about Oxfordshire) to carry it out as well as they could. Then, again, the Member for MidOxfordshire had criticised their administration by saying that the county councils were not taking the proper steps, or were not uniform in their way of dealing with the question of the suitability of applicants for holdings. The hon. Gentleman suggested that instead of the county councils inquiring into the suitability of applicants it should be done by officials under the Small Holdings Commission. He really did not think that the Committee were prepared to appoint Commissioners and Sub-Commissioners, as would have to be done in almost every district of every county if the suggestion were adopted. The hon. Member for Henley had made a remark which would lead to the inference that people did not realise what a tremendous success the Act had been, and the hon. Gentleman judged of its success by the statement of the President of the Board of Agriculture that there had been a very large number of applications. The question was whether those who had applied understood the conditions on which they would receive their small holdings, and whether or not they were suitable. Many people thought that anyone could manage a small holding. Those who had experience knew that it took a very good man to work a small holding. Therefore, the question of suitability was one of very great importance. But the question to which, after all, hon. Gentlemen must address themselves was that on which the hon. Member for Northampton had spoken, namely, the money part of the proposal, and if they restricted themselves to the money provisions, he thought they would have a right to complain of the slowness of the means adopted to bring the people back to the land. This question arose in the first instance a few months ago, and attention was called at that time to a leaflet published by the National Liberal Publication Department, written by the hon. Member for the Rugby division, who said that the great difficulty would be the cost of setting out the land, dividing it, fencing it, and supplying buildings and the like, and that this expense, unless some money was given under subsection (2), would stop the work. During the debate it transpired that the Government were not prepared to produce the money for that particular purpose, and the National Liberal Publication Department produced another edition of the leaflet, in which the hon. Member for the Rugby division said the great difficulty was a decidedly different one. But he would like to remind hon. Gentlemen opposite, who went about the country trying to encourage people to apply, that they knew perfectly well what the great difficulty was, namely, that there was not enough money forthcoming to start the early stages and to put the Act quickly into operation. He would like to learn from the hon. Baronet the Member for South Somerset how much of the £100,000 had been spent by the 31st March. Those who had gone about lecturing on this subject, like the hon. Member for North Buckinghamshire and others, had fully expected, he believed, that the £100,000 was only for one quarter, and that there would be £400,000 for the year 1908–9. The leaflet to which he had referred would appear to lead to that conclusion. But so far from that being the case, the £100,000 which ought to have been spent by the 31st March had not been spent; not a penny had been voted for the purposes of the Act in this year's Estimates. There, he thought, they could blame the President of the Board of Agriculture for not having stood up for his rights to the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he was arranging his Budget for this year. The £100,000 might have been very usefully spent for the purposes of the Act. If the President of the Board of Agriculture had been a little more courageous in dealing with the Chancellor of the Exchequer—he hoped he would find the present Chancellor of the Exchequer a little more lenient in this respect—he would have secured the £100,000 for the first quarter, and another £100,000 in the second quarter, or at any rate he might have hoped to get £400,000 in the course of the year. If hon. Gentlemen wished to criticise the way in which the Act was worked they should turn their attention to the financial side of the matter, for there was where the difficulty came in. Nothing was done by the Board of Agriculture to encourage co-operation. If they were going to collect a large number of small holders in any particular place they must do something to bring their produce to market, to collect and distribute it. The Board of Agriculture's business should be to ask for assistance for this particular purpose, either to set up establishments for collecting or to help in making light railways or motor connections with the principal centres for the collection and distribution of the produce. If that were done by the Board of Agriculture they would help the small holders very much more than by merely saying, "We have a large number of applications. What a splendid success our scheme is." He did not quite understand what the hon. Baronet had said about the area divided between these two Commissioners. He understood him to say the dividing line was between the Severn and the Wash. That might answer very well, but he should have thought it would have the effect of dividing a good many different counties and separating them so as to be under different Commissioners. It certainly had that effect in the county to which he belonged, and he should hardly think it was a satisfactory plan that different Commissioners should have to deal with the same council. On the question of swine fever, he urged the hon. Baronet to try and do something to make the Orders issued on this subject more intelligible than they were at present. He had heard very strong complaints of the latest Order being almost impossible to understand, and though he sympathised with all that had been said as to the necessity for stamping out this disease, it should be done in a way which would not harass and annoy the authorities who had to carry out the duties. Although this particular Order might do very little harm to markets which were more or less in the middle of a county it had a very serious effect on markets which depended for their supply upon an area outside the county boundary, although owing to the conformation of the country it was practically the same district. He did not think anything had been done under this Swine Fever Order to meet the difficulty of markets of that kind, and as Oswestry, which he represented, was one of them he hoped that also would receive proper consideration from the hon. Baronet. He wished to emphasise what had been said as to the necessity of dealing with the question of the horse supply, especially in time of war. He would have thought that no opportunity could have been better than the present to take energetic measures. The Minister for War had admitted that the horse supply was deficient, and he would have thought this would be the time for the President of the Board of Agriculture to do his very best to urge that a scheme should be adopted at once, in the interests not only of the Army, but of the farmers. He hoped they would have some satisfactory statement on this subject, because it was one which certainly must be discussed and was of vital importance both to the Army and to agriculture. He hoped the hon. Member for Ashford would persist in his intention of going to a division if he did not get a satisfactory answer.

*MR. LEVY LEVER (Essex, Harwich) urged that some steps were necessary to encourage the county councils to provide small holdings, and especially to stop the migration of labourers from the countryside if their aspiration to become tillers of the soil on their own account was to be realised and the Act was not to become a dead letter. Very many county councils had adopted an attitude of masterly inactivity, to which they had become accustomed on many occasions when local authorities wished to defeat the aims of Parliament. In many instances county councils were adopting an attitude calculated to deter would-be applicants, to discourage others who had already applied, and to dishearten those who had made up their minds that agricultural pursuits should be their life-long avocation. It was true the Act had only been in force some five months, but it should be borne in mind that there was a certain period before when the county councils had an opportunity of making the necessary arrangements and provisions for putting the Act into work, and very little had been done, in some cases practically nothing. In Essex very little had been done, and yet it was a county which lent itself uncommonly well to small holdings, the complexion of which if taken vigorously in hand might be entirely changed. Wages were proverbially low, cottage accommodation was defective and totally inadequate, and land, although perhaps not always of the best, was inexpensive. It was easily acquired by purchase, because recently a large amount had been brought into the market by auction. The attitude of the county council had been such as would discourage not only small holders, but those who were anxious and willing to help small holders. He, in conjunction with the hon. Baronet the Member for Colchester and others, had formed a Small Holdings Association for Colchester and the district, with the object not so much of taking land as of assisting their members in order that they might fulfil the conditions which they understood would be imposed by the county council. Seeing that no forward movement was being made by the county council, the secretary of the Small Holdings Association wrote to the clerk of the county council saying they had already applications from their members for 1,000 acres, asking whether the council was prepared to meet the demand, and also offering to assist them in all ways possible, and to take an area of land themselves and sub-let it to their members. The answer was most antipathetic. "The council have not yet acquired any land for the purpose of small holdings, and it is very doubtful if they will be able to do so to any considerable extent before Michaelmas of next year. With regard to letting land to your society, if you apply stating the acreage and locality you require your application will be considered in due course, but would it not be cheaper and better for your society to hire land direct from the landowner and re-let it without the intervention of the council? I may add that the county council have not yet decided whether they will let land to a co-operative society, who might admit sub-tenants quite incapable of properly cultivating the land." There it was clear that no land was to be had for sixteen months and there was no promise that in sixteen months those applicants would have land at all. They were to be held in suspense, not knowing whether they were to have land or not, with the result that the men would not apply because their masters might get to know—and to overcome that was the object of the Small Holdings Society—that they had made application, with the result, as they had the winter intervening, they ran the risk, and not a very remote one, of being dismissed from their employment when winter came and of being turned out of their cottages. In Essex that was a very serious matter because there was difficulty in obtaining cottages. That was not the kind of treatment which would retain the people on the land. The concluding passage of the letter presupposed that the society would mismanage their affairs. Considering that the committee of the society was composed chiefly of tenant farmers who had agreed to look after the small holders and aid them as far as they could, he saw no reason why they should not be as well off under the ægis of this society as under the county council. It was not surprising that so little progress had been made, especially when they knew that the Essex County Council would not purchase. They would not provide small holdings until 1909, if they provided them then; they would not recognise the society, and to his knowledge they had refused applicants who were well able to farm small holdings. That was in the very year when a noble Lord, who was a large landowner and had several farms in his own occupation for a great number of years, had at last let them, with the result that men had been dismissed from their employment. But much to be regretted, although perhaps not to be avoided, the unfortunate part of it was that those men who had occupied the cottages for many years had already received notice to quit at very short, and he believed, unduly short, notice. He pressed the hon. Baronet to make some representation to the county councils to accelerate their work, and to give some promise in order that the labourers might know whether they were to have the small holdings or not. He hoped that something might also be done to start a demonstration scheme of small holdings, so as to show how a scheme of co-operation could be carried out, because without co-operation the movement could not succeed.

MR. ABEL SMITH (Hertfordshire, Hertford) said he was sure that there were hon. Members opposite as well as on the Opposition side of the House who would deprecate in the strongest possible way the uncalled-for attack which had been made upon the administration of the county councils in regard to the Small Holdings Act. The hon. Member for Mid Oxfordshire had especially distinguished himself in that connection, for he appeared to imagine that it was the bounden duty of the county council to provide small holdings to all those who had been promised them by Radical Members and candidates at the last election. The hon. Member therefore was very indignant because the Oxfordshire County Council had failed to provide land for some of his friends to whom he had promised small holdings. Were hon. Members opposite who had spoken in that sense prepared to say that 85 per cent. or any other percentage of applications came from persons for whom small holdings ought to be provided, and who were likely to make them a success if they were put into possession of them? It was said that the county councils had been neglecting their duty in this matter. He had heard what was going on in many counties besides his own, and his information was that the Small Holdings Committees were working extremely hard and doing their best to make the Act a success. A remarkable instance of this had occurred in his own county. A considerable batch of applications came from one particular parish, and two members of the county council went to hold an inquiry there and interviewed the applicants. Both those gentlemen were prejudiced against the Act, one was a Conservative and the other a Liberal, but nevertheless they both came back from that inquiry with an entirely different view from that which they previously held. The result of their inquiry was that they were assured as to the genuineness of those applications and they made a most favourable report to the council. What was the charge which hon. Members made against the county councils? The County Council of Cambridgeshire had been mentioned, and the complaint in that case was that they did not think they would be able to provide more than 1,000 acres for small holdings by next Michaelmas. In Cambridgeshire there were a large number of applicants, but if they were able to provide anything like 1,000 acres by next Michaelmas, in his opinion they would have done very good work indeed. He was afraid they would have to pay considerable compensation to get rid of the present occupiers. A complaint had been made against the action of the County Council of Rutland who had been so bold as to reject thirty-three applications out of fifty. That committee rejected those applicants because, in their opinion, they were not likely people to make small holdings a success. He thought it was the duty of the Small Holdings Committee not to risk failure by entertaining applications from unsuitable persons who were not likely to make small holdings a success. Some hon. Members had complained that the county councils had failed up to the present to put any of these applicants in possession of the land. He did not see how they could have done it in the time. The Small Holdings Act only came into force on the 1st January last, and if the land was already occupied it would be impossible without paying compensation to get possession of it before Michaelmas, 1909. If the owner happened to be willing to let the land earlier it might be possible to put a small number of people upon small holdings by Michaelmas next. He thought that showed how little hon. Members opposite were acquainted with the real conditions of land tenure in this country, even after the discussion of the Land Tenure Bill, which they so strenuously supported two years ago, and which had made the difficulty of obtaining possession of land greater than it was before, because the present occupiers had to be paid heavy compensation if they were turned out. Notice would have to be given next Michaelmas to some of the tenants. But the real difficulty was with regard to the working of the Small Holdings Act. In certain counties they had a large number of applicants, and the Small Holdings Committee concluded that a considerable number of them were men who ought to be given small holdings. The next step was that the Committee would proceed to look round the county for 3,000 or 4,000 acres of land, and they would discover that hardly any land throughout the county was available for the purpose. How were they to act? As far as he could see the only way was to purchase any land which they were able to obtain at reasonable rates, giving the tenants notice to quit at Michaelmas, 1909, and meantime the claims for compensation must be settled as favourably to the county councils as possible. The conditions prevailing in some counties illustrated very forcibly the difficulty of putting this Act into operation, and he thought the hon. Baronet who represented the Board of Agriculture was right when he said that the correct policy to pursue was that there should be no great hurry in bringing the Act to a successful conclusion. With regard to the question of horse breeding he thought it would be generally recognised in all parts of the House that this was a most important matter at the present time and was becoming more and more important as time went on, because the demand for horses was likely to increase in the future. Although the Board of Agriculture had not full control over this question, he thought they might reasonably ask for a clear statement as to the policy they meant to adopt in the future in regard to this most important matter. He thought it was a very reasonable request that a certain sum of money should be spent by the Board of Agriculture to encourage horse-breeding in this country. There were two parts of this question which might claim their attention. One was the necessity for a regular supply of suitable remounts for the Army in time of peace; and the other was that provision should also be made for the extraordinary demand for horses which always arose when war was declared. The real solution of this question lay with the military authorities, but he was of opinion that horses should be bought at a younger age than was the case at present. Almost any farmer could breed a colt and rear him up to three years old, but it was only one farmer in a hundred who could handle a young horse properly and turn him out as a finished article five or six years old. He was sure it would be of great advantage to the farmers of this country and do a great deal to encourage horse breeding if a policy were adopted under which three-year-olds would be bought instead of six or seven-year-olds as at present. He believed this would not involve any great expense because it would not be necessary to establish the depots which had been advocated in some quarters. He saw no objection to a certain number of horses being bought as three-year-olds and drafted into the different cavalry regiments at home. They could be kept until they were four years old when they could be properly handled by the rough riders, and in the following spring they would be able to do a certain amount of light work. They would afterwards go into real work as five-year-olds. He believed that that would meet the difficulty in regard to the supply of horses for the Army in time of peace. So far as the Board of Agriculture were concerned in encouraging the breeding of horses, the first thing to do was to provide more premium stallions. It was really rather absurd that the districts which stallions were supposed to travel should be of such great size. In the district in which he lived—it was called A district under the scheme of the Royal Commission—places far apart were included, and it might very well happen that the owner of a mare might have to send her a long way indeed. Smaller districts were wanted, and a larger sum should be placed at the disposal of the Board of Agriculture, the Royal Commission, or whatever body had the administration of this matter. There should be an inquiry as to what was really the condition of affairs in the country in regard to the supply of mares suitable for breeding. It was said by some people that our best mares were being sent abroad, and on the other hand there were some high authorities who said that there was a fair supply of mares in the country if their owners could only be induced to allow them to breed. He was not sure but that the amount paid in respect of each premium stallion might be reduced. A great deal had been heard about the scheme of the Brood Mare Society. That was a very good scheme, but he was not sure that it was not a little too complicated for practical purposes. He agreed with what had already been said in regard to the unsatisfactory position of the hon. Baronet who at present represented the Department of Agriculture in this House. He did not think the representation of the Department would be on a satisfactory footing until——

*THE CHAIRMAN: This is really not in order, because the Minister responsible for this Vote has no power in regard to the matter which the hon. Gentleman is discussing. It does not arise under the Vote for the Board of Agriculture.

MR. ABEL SMITH begged pardon; he had really finished what he was going to say. He hoped they would have in this House a Member of the Government who was really officially connected with the Department.

*MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton) supported the hon. Member for the Rye Division in asking an inquiry into the ravages of birds in relation to agriculture and fisheries. For sentimental reasons a policy had been adopted of protecting all birds whether they were useful or otherwise. The information given by the authorities on this subject was very conflicting, and it was very desirable to institute an inquiry in order that reliable information might be obtained as to the birds which were prejudicial to human interests, and which ought to be decreased if not exterminated. But one of his chief reasons for intervening in the debate was to refute with all the vigour he possessed the statements of the hon. Member for the Woodstock Division about the County Council of Cambridgeshire. It always seemed to him that it was better, if possible, for hon. Members to confine their attention to the districts they knew something about. The hon. Member had apparently not made himself acquainted with the extreme difficulties of Cambridgeshire. He did not realise that in the constituency which he himself represented there were about eighty parishes in Cambridgeshire besides ten in the Isle of Ely, nor did he know that an energetic committee of the county council began work as soon as applications came. That committee had been at work almost daily making inquiries with an assiduity and patriotism which it would be difficult to surpass. In view of the facts of the case the accusation made by the hon. Member was unfounded. Parliament passed Acts of Parliament, and then trusted with surprising success for the carrying of them out to the voluntary patriotism of the most disinterested class in the country, who willingly sacrificed the welfare of their own pursuits in the interests of local government, but received very little help from the central authorities such as the Board of Agriculture. In regard to the Small Holdings Act if there was any fault to be found, it lay not with the county councils, but with the Board of Agriculture, who had done little to assist the county councils in the matter. For example, two commissioners had been appointed, and were in receipt of large salaries. What had they done? What was the daily routine of work with which they were occupied? And what answers had been returned to those who had applied for the establishment of experimental holdings? But speaking generally, the paltry £150,000 voted annually and the annual discussion on the administration of the Board of Agriculture were a ridiculous mockery of the needs of agriculture. This country ignored agriculture altogether. Neither party in the State had ever had a real agricultural policy. The Party opposite supported a policy which would result in raising rents and stimulating Colonial competition. On the Liberal side the policy consisted in endeavouring to increase the number of people engaged in agriculture and laughing scornfully at any demands made by agricultural representatives on the ground that the farmers were always asking for doles. It seemed to him that there were three main lines of policy which should be pursued by the Board of Agriculture. The hon. Member for North Buckinghamshire had urged the enormous importance of agricultural education through the establishment of experimental farms in various parts of the country. Unfortunately the Board of Agriculture was not a real factor in the life of the farmer. He only came across it when it refused to compensate him for loss in connection with a swine fever Order or in some similar matter. The second main-line of policy was really to help agriculture by promoting co-operation. But while co-operation had been mentioned since the debate began, not a word had been said on the subject of railway companies and railway rates. It was his fortune some years ago to suggest to a large railway company the advantage which a light railway would be to the agriculturists in a certain part of Cambridgeshire, and the answer he received was, quoting from memory—

> "I fear that a light railway in the district which you mention would not be of much use; but your suggestion will be made the subject of immediate inquiry."

That was a very hopeful attitude to assume! Those who undertook the inquiry had already come to the conclusion that the inquiry would not be of much use! Railway companies were the greatest possible obstacles to real co-operation, although they might afford the greatest assistance to it. It was not merely a matter of the preferential rates now given by railway companies to foreign importers and foreign producers as compared with the home producers; but it was also a matter of opening up districts in this country. He thought that under the Board of Agriculture, perhaps acting in conjunction with the Board of Trade, it was as well worth while to help to collect agricultural produce in this country as to open up new cotton-growing districts in the wilds of Uganda. The third line of policy to which he wished to direct the attention of the hon. Baronet was afforestation. They were always hearing of the great profits that were to be made by future generations by the planting of trees, and the large amount of employment which afforestation could give. He was certain that, at any rate in large tracts of land in England which had practically fallen out of cultivation, trees would pay better than any struggling pasture land which might now exist there. He ventured to say that after years of procrastination, and after experiments had been made in Scotland, something might be done in England to start afforestation on a much larger scale than anything yet attempted. The hon. Member for Rye and several other Gentlemen were able, before the ruling of the Chairman, to mention the representation of the Board of Agriculture in this House. It was impossible, however, to pursue that subject now. But he suggested to the Committee that they should reflect on the position of the landlords, tenants, and agricultural labourers who fought probably against far greater odds than any other people in this country and who saw every year not only the prospects of profit disappearing, but the existence of their whole capital jeopardised by the state of the weather and the state of the land. These men were engaged in an industry which employed more labour and capital than any other industry in the country, and all that was devoted by the State to help that industry was the sum of £150,000 or rather a part of £150,000 for this miserably small sum was supposed to safeguard agriculture and fisheries. He submitted that it was anomalous that the Department which had charge of two such important industries should be represented in one place and not in another. It seemed to him that the size of our financial devotion to agriculture was amply referable by the amount of interest taken by town Members in the wants of agriculture, and he ventured to suggest that the movement which was going on in the country for the formation of an independent agricultural party—if it ever succeeded in establishing such a party in the political sphere—would command for agriculture the attention which had been denied to it by both the great political parties in the State, and which it would never get so long as it had to fight, whether under Liberal or Conservative Governments, for the time and money now lavished on Ireland, Scotland, and on the towns of England.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland) said that during the last few months there had been a general temptation in the party opposite to take an interest in agriculture. They had awakened from the slumbers of more than half a century when, under the sway of the Manchester school, they regarded agriculture as an interest of no consideration to the State. He entirely associated himself with those in the House who urged the necessity of stamping out disease amongst the stock and the various animals employed in the agricultural industry of the country. A great deal had been said about horse-breeding; but he did not think that that matter would ever be satisfactorily dealt with until more attention was given to securing suitable brood mares, and not so much devoted to the stallions. He was afraid that a great many breeders did not send their mares to stud until they were too old, and, therefore, the produce could not be expected to be good. Anyone who had bred horses of a high-class stamp knew that unless stallions were put to mares with a pedigree going six or seven generations back, the stock would not be worth much. He did not know whether hon. Gentlemen opposite would take a pattern from the Government of Turkey, but the law had been distinctly laid down by that Government that mares should not be exported from Arabia, and that even horses were exported with great difficulty. It was the export of mares from this country which had lowered the standard of the breed of our horses; and until the Government made it worth while for the small breeders to keep good mares, these animals would be bought up and sent abroad to our loss and to the advantage of our competitors. There was no doubt that the Board of Agriculture had for many years past failed to do all it might have done for the interests of agriculture. He did not blame the officials; the blame lay with the House. In the conflict of parties the real interests of agriculture had been left out of sight. Meanwhile the United States of America had been very active. The Department of Agriculture there had a well-organised Bureau of Chemistry, which had been of the most signal service to agriculture in that great country. He suggested to the Minister of Agriculture and to the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset that a start should be made in the same direction in this country. Scientific knowledge alone was a very unreliable guide; it must be proved by practical experience on different soils and in different climates; and he suggested that a Bureau of Chemistry should be established here to conduct scientific investigations and also make practical experiments in the cultivation of various crops now grown in this country, and in new branches of agriculture. Germany had taken steps in that direction. Something should be done also in the preparation of poultry for the markets. At present all these things could not be properly attended to by private effort, and he believed that if his suggestion were carried out the resources of our soil would be largely developed to the great benefit of the agricultural community. As to the question of small holdings, in justice to the county council in the part of the country which he represented, he felt obliged to say that there had been a most whole-hearted effort to apply the Small Holdings Act. They had displayed considerable energy in the effort to put the Act into force, and they could not be blamed if it had not hitherto been possible to establish a greater number of small holdings.

*MR. SILCOCK (Somersetshire, Wells) said he wished to bring before the Committee the great hardship and loss which fell upon farmers in connection with the destruction of animals affected with tuberculosis. It was often impossible for them to tell whether the animals were affected until they had been killed, and then the loss invariably fell upon the farmer. As the destruction of the cattle was for the benefit of the public health, it seemed to him that the loss should not fall solely upon the farmer, but on the public generally. He asked the representative of the Board of Agriculture to make some statement if possible which would give some sort of hope to agriculturists that this hardship would not continue to fall upon them. He passed to the administration of the Small Holdings Act. He was glad to hear the optimistic account the hon. Baronet had given of the working of the Act. The great danger was that it would break down under the enormous pressure on the county councils, because far greater advantage had been taken of the Act than the most enthusiastic of its supporters had ever ventured to hope. He asked whether it would not be possible for the Board to take advantage of Section 16 of the Act and of the grant of £100,000 and purchase some areas of land in various parts of the country and establish small holdings upon them. He suggested that the Department should purchase land in the open market and then set up small colonies of small holdings in various parts of the country. He hoped the Department would do very much more than they had hitherto done for the help of the small holders under the Act. It had been pointed out that in France upwards of £1,000,000 was voted for agriculture, as against £150,000 in this country, while £200,000 was voted by the small country of Denmark. He hoped another session the Board would be prepared to ask for a much larger grant, and to undertake other branches of work. He might indicate many ways in which this country might follow the lead of Canada. Representing a part of the country which gave its name to one of our most famous agricultural products—he meant Cheddar cheese—and noticing as he did that if any Member in the House asked for Cheddar cheese he invariably got not Cheddar, but Canadian Cheddar—unless he made a point of asking for English Cheddar—he was naturally interested in the policy which had enabled the Canadians to send such an enormous quantity of cheese into this country. He found that the industry had been built up entirely owing to the action of the Canadian Government. By practical experiments they had satisfied the farmers that the industry could be made a success, and they saw the result. Reference had been made to the fruit-growing industry. There was no part of the world where better fruit of certain kinds could be grown than in this country. In Somersetshire there were apples grown which could not be beaten in any part of the world. Yet an enormous quantity of apples were being brought into England. Here again the Canadian Government stepped in. Desiring to help their agriculturists they had chosen a part of the country which they considered specially favourable for fruit-growing, acquired premises, set up a refrigerating plant, made arrangements with the shipping and the railway companies for refrigerating cars and compartments, took over the whole business, kept account of the apples supplied in Liverpool, sent them right through to this country in refrigerating cars and chambers, and divided the profits among the farmers. After the trade had been established the farmers were able to carry it on. He did not ask that our Parliament should follow slavishly the Canadian Government in this matter, but he did ask that more attention should be attached to agriculture by the Board of Agriculture. He was satisfied that a great deal could be done to foster that industry if the Government was prepared to spend more money and time in the way he had indicated.

*MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey) called attention to the refusal of the Board of Agriculture to withdraw the prohibition against the importation, for immediate slaughter, of cattle from countries which were free from cattle disease. He believed this prohibition would have a very serious effect on the meat supply of this country, and that unless the prohibition order was rescinded and those countries which were free from cattle disease were allowed to send their cattle here, we should fall into the hands of the meat trust, and prices would be put up very seriously against the consumers. At the present time the consumers of London and the large industrial towns had to pay considerably more for beef than they need, and that was entirely owing to this prohibitive order. Not only was the price of beef put up, but cattle not being killed here deprived the consumer of an opportunity of getting cheap and properly inspected meat, and a large amount of skilled labour of work. There were at Deptford and Birkenhead large markets for the reception of considerable numbers of foreign cattle and sheep. They were properly fitted up for the purpose of dealing with large numbers of animals, and provided with proper refrigerating and cooling chambers so that the meat might be put in a fit condition for the market. These large abattoirs were used only for cattle which came from the United States of America and Canada. It was said that English cattle would run a considerable risk of contracting contagious disease such as foot-and-mouth disease if cattle were allowed to come in from any European country, although that country might be absolutely free from disease. He and those who thought with him believed that there was not the slightest risk run by the cattle of, this country by the importation and slaughter of foreign cattle in these abattoirs. The cattle coming in were inspected both before and after they were slaughtered, and if the meat was found to be diseased it was destroyed. Not only so, but everybody employed in these abattoirs was disinfected in such a way that it was impossible for any disease to be carried out of the markets, even supposing it came in. They had had the assurance of the hon. Baronet who represented the Board of Agriculture that no case of outbreak of any cattle disease had ever been traced to the Deptford cattle market. He believed that that statement was equally true with regard to the Birkenhead cattle market. During the whole of the time that these two markets had been allowed to receive cattle, even when foot-and-mouth disease was prevalent in the countries from which the cattle came, no case of that disease had been traced as coming from these markets. The right hon. Member for Bordesley had given a most eloquent description of the extreme virulence of foot-and-mouth disease, but it was not more virulent than any other infectious disease from which men and animals suffered. The friends of small-pox or scarlet fever patients were allowed to visit them in hospital, and he had never heard of a case of infection arising from those visits allowed by the authorities, where there had been proper disinfection. The same thing might be said in regard to disease among foreign cattle coming into the market at Deptford or Birkenhead or Glasgow, though Glasgow did not come within the purview of the Vote, and he would not further allude to it. Of course the hon. Baronet would say: "Oh, this is a prohibitory Order, and it is the premium which people have to pay for the prevention of disease." If that was so, he sincerely hoped that the agricultural people would pay that premium, and not put the cost upon the consumer. They had the benefit and the profit of selling their own cattle. But was it a question of disease? Was not the whole thing flavoured with that protection which the agricultural interest was always ready to invoke? There was an outbreak of cattle plague at Edinburgh some time ago, but it was not discovered that it had arisen from the importation of diseased foreign cattle into Scotland or into England, and nobody could trace how the cattle had been infected. He had never heard even the hon. Baronet suggest that foreign cattle were the cause of the outbreak. Yet the farmers rushed forward and insisted that, even though there was no trace of disease from foreign cattle, the Board of Agriculture should prohibit the importation of foreign hay and straw into England. He could easily imagine that the agricultural community would have been greatly pleased to get rid of foreign competitors in the hay and straw markets, but they had very little thought about the feeding of contractors' horses, which used large quantities of hay and straw. There was not the slightest shadow of proof that the disease arose from that source, yet the importation of hay and straw was prohibited from Holland. The Board of Agriculture always showed itself favourable towards restrictions which benefited the agricultural interest; yet even the Board of Agriculture had not the courage to prohibit the importation of hay and straw from all the countries of Europe. They made exceptions in the case of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The hon. Baronet in answer to a Question which he had put to him had said that he made the exceptions because the sanitary arrangements of Norway and Sweden were so perfect that there was no fear of any infection coming through. There had been no case of foot-and-mouth disease in Norway and Sweden for nineteen years, and therefore there was no risk at all of importing foot-and-mouth disease from those countries. There had been no outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Denmark for four years; therefore, if they admitted hay and straw on the ground that the sanitary arrangements of those countries were so perfect, there could be no reason why they should refuse to admit cattle. He had asked that question of Lord Carrington recently, and it had reduced the noble Lord to silence. He had also asked a Question of the hon. Baronet the other day, and he had answered every part of that Question except the one point to which he now referred, and when he came to that the hon. Baronet hesitated to reply. He asked the hon. Baronet now to give an answer as to why hay and straw could be imported from Norway and Sweden, where there had been no cattle disease for nineteen years, and yet that cattle should be refused admission. The hon. Baronet might say that Sweden had no cattle, but if he said that he would be entirely wrong, because before this Order was made it was a common thing for cattle to come from Gothenburg to this country, where they were very well known, where they were much used, and where they fetched a big price in the market. That could not be the answer, because the cattle were exported largely from Sweden. There could be no reason why they should not have cattle from Denmark, which produced a large quantity of hay and where the Government looked very closely after the interest of the agricultural class dealing with the dairy trade, the preservation of which was a guarantee of the health of the cattle. There was not the slightest risk of foot-and-mouth disease coming to this country, nor of pleuro-pneumonia or anything of that sort, from those three countries. There was one other question on which he wished to touch, and that was the serious position in which the Government put the meat supply of the country by this prohibitive Order. They had allowed the cattle of the United States of America to come here. There was a very large Meat Trust in Chicago which had absolute control over the meat trade. The consequence was that the Meat Trust Syndicate, through its agents, practically settled the price of beef in London and every other place in England. And they could not help it. Anybody who looked at the returns of fat cattle sent to the scheduled markets of this country would find that during the last five or six years the number had decreased 10 per cent. In 1902 there were over 1,010,000, and there had since been a decrease of 10 per cent. upon that number. The Meat Trust fixed the price of beef, and the local butcher, if he found that he could get a regular supply of good sound beef, bought it instead of paying dearer for English beef. The price of beef fixed the price of cattle, and the English breeder, to effect a sale, had to take such a price for his cattle as would allow the butcher to sell it at the price of chilled beef. The English breeder found that he could not feed and breed cattle to advantage. The price of American beef at Deptford Market used to be several pence per stone below home-fed beef. To-day it was actually the same price. In *The Times* he found that the price of beef sold in the Deptford Cattle Market was yesterday at least one penny more than the price of home-grown English beef. For the last two years the price of beef killed at Deptford and at Birkenhead had been fixed at the same price as home-grown English beef. He had asked the hon. Baronet the other day to give a Return of the average price of meat for the last twenty-five years. In that Return it was proved most conclusively that during this last year the price of beef coming from Deptford Cattle Market was exactly the same as that of meat coming from home-grown cattle in the ordinary markets of England. Slowly the Meat Trust was pushing out the English producer, and they had the power to undersell him, for they could flood the market with their supplies or they could keep them back. The only way of dealing with this Meat Trust was to act on the free trade principle of throwing open the areas of supply so that all the countries which were free from cattle disease, and not under the control of a meat trust, might send their cattle here. The leather trade by the present policy had suffered severely because of the deficiency in the supply of hides, with the result that where once workmen earned good wages they were slowly being driven out. The hides of the cattle which were sent to Deptford market from the United States and Canada were salted down and sent back across the Atlantic under an agreement, and admitted to America with a rebate. These hides were not used in England, and all the resulting trade had left us. They had also lost the advantage of having the skins of something like a million sheep which were killed at Deptford. These skins had been used in various manufactures here. His constituency, therefore, had a particular grievance, while the consumers of London and other big industrial centres of the country had a greater grievance in this matter, for they were actually paying an increasing price for their beef. The Chairman of the Kitchen Committee of the House took great credit to himself for not allowing a particle of frozen mutton or chilled beef to be eaten by Members. He did not know how he told, but that was his assertion, and he invariably made the statement with tears in his eyes if anyone suspected him of trying to palm off anything like chilled meat. The only thing the ordinary working man now had to fall back upon was frozen mutton and chilled beef, and chilled or frozen Argentine beef was very poor eating indeed. Of course, the working man had not the opportunity every day of having a hot joint. He had to eat up the cold joint to make both ends meet. He envied nobody sitting down to a dinner of cold New Zealand mutton. He had no desire to move the notice of Motion in his name until he had heard the answer of the hon. Baronet, but perhaps if his answer was not satisfactory he should feel it necessary to move the reduction of the Vote.

Lord WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said he could not imagine how any free trader could possibly lay the charge against the Board of Agriculture that it was in any way protective, because the smallness of the Vote—and he regretted it extremely—showed that it allowed very little indeed towards helping what a great many speakers, when they addressed agricultural audiences, always described as the greatest and most important industry of the country. Personally, he took the view that the Vote ought to be very largely increased, and that a large amount of money could be spent beneficially, not in any way in a protective sense, by showing to the people the use of different crops and manures, and otherwise conducting them to a higher system of agriculture. Anybody who examined these Estimates must be struck by the point that practically more than half the total amount voted went in salaries and expenses for matters of that kind. No doubt it entailed heavy work on the Board of Agriculture to look after all the different diseases which were likely to break out, and it required a large number of inspectors and officers. But with the exception of the prevention of disease we spent practically nothing in promoting the interests of agriculture. He entirely differed from the last speaker on the question of the importation of foreign stores, as he believed if they were re-admitted the country would instantly run a great risk of cattle plague and pleuro-pneumonia, which would necessitate a greatly increased Vote for compensation for slaughtered herds. If ever there was a suspicion that this country was infected with cattle disease or plague it would entirely knock on the head one branch of agriculture, which had been most profitable during the last few years, namely, the export of pedigree stock. He noticed there was an item of £41,000 for compensation for slaughtered animals upon which he would like some information, as he did not understand the question and did not know that it was understood in the country. He imagined that every year there was laid by a kind of reserve fund for compensation in these cases. He saw that £40,000 had been voted in each of the last two years, and practically the same this year, and that £100 each year had been voted towards the pleuro-pneumonia account. He would like to know whether there was any money in the Treasury and what happened to it, which was set aside to pay compensation should there be an outbreak of cattle plague or whether the compensation paid would be charged upon the Estimates of the year. Last year there was an outbreak of cattle plague in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and he fancied a large number of animals were slaughtered—he believed some fifty or sixty—and he could not quite believe that £100 would be sufficient to pay the compensation involved. It would be interesting if the hon. Baronet would explain how these compensation funds were worked. He asked whether it would not be possible, if not this year, at some future date, to do something in the matter of railway rates. For a very long period Ministers of Agriculture on both sides of the House at farmers' dinners and meetings of agriculturists had said that the railways were not treating the agriculturists properly, that something ought to be done, and that they would give their utmost consideration to the subject and see that the farmer, the small holder, the market gardener, and the home producer had free access to his own market and was not hampered by preferential railway rates or unfair trading; but they appeared to be in exactly the same position they had always been in. They had had Commissions and a large amount of controversy, and though he did not wish to say a word against railway directors, they were always met with the answer: "If you sent your goods in large quantities we should be perfectly prepared to quote you exactly the same rate as we would to the foreigner," and he believed they were quite correct in saying so. The only difference was that the railway companies laid themselves out to afford the foreigner every opportunity to send his goods in large quantities to the markets—he did not blame them, because it paid them—and, on the other hand, they afforded no facilities whatever to the home producer. A railway company would think absolutely nothing of asking the British public to supply £500,000 in shares for the making of new docks, the building of new warehouses, and the erection of new machinery to deal with cargoes of foreign produce, but he did not suppose for a moment they would spend £10,000 in erecting a goods shed or granary for the handling of English produce. Several hon. Members opposite had told them that the one hope for agriculture was co-operation, and, naturally, people said: "If you believe you would be able to send your goods cheaper to market, and compete on better terms with the foreigner if you had these warehouses and granaries, why not put them up yourself?" He had always considered that that would be a most risky thing to do unless they had some assistance from the Government, because they could only deal in this country in comparatively small loads.

THE **DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN** (Mr. CALDWELL, Lanarkshire, Mid.): The question of railway rates does not come under this Vote. The Board of Agriculture has nothing to do with railway rates.

LORD **WILLOUGHBY** DE **ERESBY** said he only wished the Board of Agriculture could see their way to give some small grant towards establishing warehouses in order to get goods to market. He also thought they should attempt to do something more towards carrying out experiments in agriculture and furnishing more particulars as regards crops and manures. We lived in an era of science, and he was certain that if the use of these different chemical manures was properly understood, and more extensive experiments were made with different crops, it would do a great deal to help agriculture. They received a little assistance at present, but it merely took the form of leaflets and a journal for which they had to pay for out of their own pockets. There seemed a great desire on the part of many Members that the Board of Agriculture should try to help the Small Holdings Act by finding money to establish co-operation. He did not believe in nine cases out of ten the county councils were to blame, and he did not think in the greater part of the country these small holdings could possibly answer unless this was done. He knew of places where there was plenty of grass land where small farms might be carried on successfully, providing a creamery were set up. He was aware, however, that the moment that was done, they would be met with the cry from hon. Members opposite that it was protection, and probably the hon. Member for Preston would say that it would be giving a bounty to agriculture. He would like to point out to the hon. Baronet the Member for Somersetshire that in regard to this question in every other country in the world, and indeed in the case of every new industry which was started, help was given at the initial stages by providing facilities for making experiments and giving information. Unless the Board of Agriculture were prepared to go to the Treasury and ask for a larger grant and to spend more money in the direction he had indicated, he felt sure that the Small Holdings Act would be a great failure. He deeply regretted that the Vote for Agriculture was not larger. He also wished to re-echo the words of the hon. Member for Rye when he stated that it was a great pity the *status* of the Board of Agriculture was not going to be raised. He knew the hon. Baronet representing the Board of Agriculture had done his best, but it was extremely unfortunate that they had not a direct representative of the Board of Agriculture in this House. In the course of the last two sessions they had passed two most important Bills affecting agriculture, viz., the Land Tenure Bill and the Small Holdings Bill. One of those measures was piloted through the House by an unofficial Member, and in the other case a Minister connected with another Department took charge of the measure. If they had had a direct representative in this House to pilot the Small Holdings Bill through the Committee most probably that measure would have been a greater success. A large number of hon. Members opposite had blamed the county councils for not having put the Small Holdings Act into force. He did not think those hon. Members were thoroughly acquainted with the subject, because they did not seem to realise that in most cases six months and in some instances twelve months notice had to be given to the occupying tenant. If notice had not been given before 6th April it would be practically two years before any land would be vacant for small holdings. There were difficulties with regard to borrowing money because the Local Government Board had to be applied to as well as the Board of Agriculture and the Commissioners. The consequence was, and this applied more particularly to Lincolnshire, that it must be two years before any small holdings could be started in that county at all. He could not see how the land could possibly be acquired under any circumstances for the next year and a half. Therefore he considered it was quite wrong to blame county councils or the Board of Agriculture for not having put the Act into operation more quickly, and the charge was a little out of place in view of the fact that the House had recently passed an Act to establish the present occupiers more firmly on the land. It appeared to him that those two Acts contradicted each other. In conclusion, he hoped the hon. Baronet would be able to see his way to obtain more money from the Treasury for the carrying out of agricultural experiments and getting information, without which he was perfectly certain agriculture could not prosper and be as well looked after as it was in foreign countries, where money was spent with a lavish hand in promoting what he considered to be their greatest interest.

MR. STUART SAMUEL (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel) said that this question might be divided into four parts: (1) The education of the man who was put on to the land; (2) the procuring of the land; (3) the necessity of the man's being able to do something with the land when he got it; and (4) the interests of the consumer. He represented those who came under the fourth heading. Representing as he did an East-End constituency, those who returned him to Parliament were interested in having an ample and cheap supply of meat. According to the rule laid down by the Board of Agriculture the fact that there had been no disease in Canada during the last ten years did not get over the difficulty, and the fact that in Norway and Sweden there had been no disease during the last nineteen years did not render those countries free from infection. Upon this subject he failed to see the point of view taken by the Board of Agriculture with regard to the consumer, nd he asked the hon. Baronet if he would consent to appoint a Committee of Inquiry in order to see whether those countries which he presumed to be infected were able to send a supply of cheap meat to this country. But quite independently of the fact that he represented a constituency of working men, he also represented a large number of Jews who, owing to the exigencies of their religion, were obliged to have a quantity of fresh-killed meat. Those people were under a great disability owing to the action of the Board in not allowing live cattle to come into Deptford. It was a fact that there was no case of infection known from Deptford; in the whole history of that place not one single case of infection had been traced to it. He would go further and state that the hon. Baronet and his Department had thrown cold water upon a project for killing cattle at Alderney. Surely the hon. Baronet could not urge that there was likely to be any infection from Alderney when he allowed meat to be imported without any difficulty from Antwerp already killed. He urged the hon. Baronet to appoint a Committee—not a Departmental Committee—to inquire into the whole question of the importation of meat into this country, because this was a subject which greatly affected the working classes whom he represented.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) moved to reduce the Vote by £100 as a protest against the way the gardeners at Kew were treated. Hon. Members had spoken in favour of spending thousands for the breeding of horses, and other expenditure had been suggested for the prevention of disease. This was the third time he had appealed to the hon. Baronet upon this subject. He knew that every Member of the House was proud of the Royal Gardens of Kew, which, as a centre of Imperial plant culture, reflected the greatest possible credit upon the Government. Those who had seen at Kew Gardens the arrangement of the beds of flowers and the avenues of trees must have been struck with the skill displayed in their cultivation. To his mind it was a great pity that one's enthusiasm with regard to cultivation there should be marred by the miserable pay of the men who were responsible for keeping up Kew Gardens. There were fifty men receiving 21s. per week. It might be argued that certain benefits appertained to employment at Kew Gardens, but he would deal with that point later. The gardeners were paid 21s. per week. In the summer they commenced work at six o'clock in the morning and continued until six o'clock at night, and during the winter they worked from daylight to dark. He did not think that any hon. Member would argue that a skilled gardener doing such responsible work and receiving 21s. per week could be considered as getting an adequate wage, more especially viewed in the light of the wages paid, not only in Kew Gardens, but also in Richmond and in the Royal parks of London. The labourers at Kew were paid an average of 24s. per week, which was 3s. more than the skilled gardeners employed there. The gardeners in the Royal Parks were paid 27s. per week or 6s. more than the men employed in Kew Gardens. The London County Council paid their men from 27s. to 30s. per week, or 9s. per week more than the gardeners at Kew received. The Board of Works paid labourers 7d. per hour at Kew, and at Richmond the scavengers employed by the corporation received 25s. per week. In face of those wages surely there could be no justification for continuing to pay the gardeners at Kew the miserable wage of 21s. per week. He hoped that he would no longer have to continue pleading that these men should receive an adequate wage. If their wages were raised to 24s. per week it would only mean a few hundred pounds a year to the Government. He was only pleading that these gardeners should receive the same wages as those paid to the labourers at Kew, and he did not think that was asking for too much. If hon. Members looked at the question from the standpoint of what was fair and just he thought they would see that it was their duty to go into the division lobby with him in order to protest against this sweating wage. It was thirteen years since the wages of the gardeners at Kew were considered, and during that time everything had increased in price and living had become much more costly.

The hon. Baronet had assigned many reasons why the Government should not accede to this demand. It had been alleged that these men were not really gardeners but improvers. He would like the House to know the conditions under which they were employed and then they could judge for themselves whether they were really improvers or gardeners. He had in his hand the Memorandum of the conditions of employment, and right throughout the word "gardener" was used and there was no mention at all of "improvers."

> "Applicants must be unmarried, between nineteen and twenty-four years of age, and must have been employed not less than four years in good gardens or nurseries. They must be healthy, free from physical defect, and not below average height."

All these conditions had to be fulfilled for a wage of 21s. a week. It was also argued that the men employed at Kew Gardens stood a chance of getting superior appointments in the Colonies. He wanted to know the number of men from Kew who had got employment in the Colonies. He ventured to say that not one in ten had got superior appointments. When they entered on their duties at Kew these men, who had the handling of the most delicate and rare plants, must be able to do skilled work, for there was no one there to train them. To say that they were improvers was to state that which was not correct, and the Government should not shelter themselves any longer under that argument. The labour was worth more than the 21s. a week which was now paid for it. If anyone wanted to know the Government's justification for paying that sweating wage he would find it in the following extract from an official Return—

> "The man whom a Dependency or Colony wishes to avoid is the man whose ambition is limited to the receipt of his pay; whose highest aspiration is the perfunctory discharge of routine duties. The man who is desired is the man who is ready to subordinate his personal comfort to his public efficiency; who does not despise the day of small things. Among the young gardeners who now go out from Kew the proportion endowed with these desirable qualities is considerable. What is needed is that this proportion should, if possible, be increased, not diminished. It is because the conditions under which admission to Kew is offered are such as tend to exclude those whose main incentive to work is immediate comfort, and whose ambitions are satisfied with a colourless career; and because these conditions do not discourage young men of higher and more reflective type of which the Empire stands in need, that the reputation of Kew is so high among those who indent upon her for men. To increase the subsistence allowance at Kew to the level of the wages paid to the journeymen gardeners in the London parks would be to make Kew as attractive to men of every type as the best paid gardening posts elsewhere in England. As the number of posts available at Kew is necessarily limited this would, as an immediate consequence, lead to the exclusion from Kew of many young men of the type that it is desirable to attract."

For a piece of special pleading that beat anything it had ever been his lot to read. It was a piece of special pleading which might be very nice if applied to men occupying positions as Cabinet Ministers. He considered that the greatest piece of snobbery he had ever read, and it all went to the making of Kew a special preserve for the sons of people who were able to keep them, owing to the fact that such a miserable wage was paid. The Estimates included an item of £115 for lectures. Last year when the amount was £100 the hon. Baronet, replying to a question, informed him that only two gardeners, who were not permanently employed at Kew, had attended the lectures. He recently asked whether the hon. Baronet as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture was aware that his Department paid £1 per lecture for two courses of such lectures, that only one student attended, and that such student was not on the staff at Kew. He further asked if he would state what fees were paid by such student. The hon. Member for the Saffron Walden division replied—

> "The reply to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The student to whom my hon. friend refers was employed as a temporary technical assistant and on that account was allowed the privilege of attending the lectures without payment of a fee."

In spite of the fact that there were only two students last year, and that this year there was only one, the Committee were asked to vote £115 for lectures, an increase of £15, though they were continually being told that the Government could not afford to give a single penny more to the men who were doing skilled work at 21s. a week. He regarded that fact alone as sufficient to justify his action in moving a reduction of the Vote. He considered the money spent on lectures was absolute waste, and he and his friends of the Labour Party would not be doing their duty if they did not protest against money being thrown away in that fashion. He would ask hon. Members on the other side of the House whether it was fair that the Government should continue to pay this wage of 21s. a week to fifty men on the grounds which had been urged in justification. He begged to move.

Dr. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford), in seconding the Amendment, expressed the hope that hon. Members would carry their convictions into the division lobby, unless the hon. Baronet gave a better and more satisfactory reply than he gave last year. He regretted the necessity of returning to the grievance, but the wage of these gardeners was a threadbare one bordering upon sweating. The present *régime* was absolutely indefensible and did not reflect credit on the President of the Board of Agriculture or the hon. Baronet. The wage should be raised to the same scale as that paid in the Royal and County Council parks. There was a great deal of disappointment and dissatisfaction on that side of the House, and as Liberals they could not support a skinflint policy. He hoped the hon. Baronet would adopt a policy which would be just and equitable to the men who had suffered so long.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £83,024, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Summerbell.*)

Colonel LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said the speeches that afternoon had ranged over a wide variety of topics, but the interests of agriculture were so diverse that he did not think anyone would grudge the time which had been spent in the discussion of the Estimates now before the Committee. They had endeavoured to place before the representative of the Board of Agriculture those subjects to which they thought it most necessary his attention should be directed. It rarely happened in the House, but up to a short time ago not a word of party recrimination had been heard. They might have felt themselves at an agricultural dinner. With the exception of one speech, not one word had been said which could be twisted into that blessed word "protection." The hon. Member for Bermondsey, however, managed to bring that question to the front. He did not blame the hon. Gentleman, because he spoke feelingly, and up to the old saying that "there was nothing like leather," and from the point of view of his constituency. The hon. Member for Bermondsey did an injustice to the right hon. Member for Wimbledon in saying that he had protection in his mind when he commended the restriction on the importation of foreign straw and hay from countries suspected of harbouring disease. His right hon. friend had known the terrible effects of the scourge in this country in the past, and in the present case there was more than a strong suspicion; he would say it was absolutely proved that there was danger in importing hay and straw from those countries. He therefore hoped that the Board of Agriculture would remain extremely firm on this subject, and also in regard to the importation of live animals, otherwise there might be a recurrence of the dire disaster formerly experienced. In the forefront of the debate had been the question of small holdings. He did not want to interfere between the hon. Baronet and his supporters, nor to mar the harmony of the proceedings by any recrimination, but he would point out to hon. Members opposite that when they found fault with the county councils or the landlords for the slowness with which they were enforcing the Small Holdings Act they should remember that that Act, if it was to be successful at all, could not be carried out all of a sudden. It was impossible with the best will in the world for even the most advanced county council to say: "We have so many applicants, and we must take the land at once." He knew well that the county councils were anxious to make the Act a success; but a large measure of patience would have to be exercised before it could be fully brought into operation. He thought that the Board of Agriculture had been placed in a very unfair position by the suggestion that any Act of Parliament could be carried out at once. However great good will there might be, there must be enormous delay, especially, where the transfer of land was involved. With regard to the horse-breeding question, he confesesd he had very small doubts as to whether they would receive any reassurance on that point from the hon. Baronet; he thought they would get scant comfort from him. The subject was, however, a most serious one, and he agreed that this was not a question of stallions. There were plenty of stallions in the country; the great deficiency was in good brood mares. Then the question of glanders was a very serious one, although it was almost the easiest upon which the hon. Baronet had been addressed. Glanders could be stamped out as effectually and as easily as hydrophodia had been. It was all a question of the expenditure of more public money, but not a very large sum. This question concerned not only farmers who were losers from glanders, but the Army and its efficiency. He knew of cavalry regiments which had lost hundreds of horses from glanders, and years had been spent in getting rid of the disease. He quite agreed that the Board of Agriculture should give attention to the analysing of feeding stuffs and the destruction of the wanble-fly and of birds, although as to the latter subject it was a difficult thing to disturb the balance of Nature, because in destroying one evil they often created a greater. The Board of Agriculture should also look after the rats, which were as destructive to farm crops as sparrows. Then there was the question of cheese. If the hon. Member who raised this question had been present at a recent Agricultural Show in Essex he would have seen beautiful cheese which had been made in Essex quite as good as Canadian cheese. What was the outcome of the debate which had rambled over innumerable subjects? The House had, as usual, demanded more money. He never knew the House do anything else, except on public platforms.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): No.

*COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Well, except the hon. Baronet, who is well known for his parsimonious character. They asked for more public money, because they believed that agriculture would be benefited thereby. There was a still greater lesson which he hoped the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset would take to heart, and that was that the agricultural party were beginning to find that there were mutual grounds on which they could help each other. They felt that agriculture had been too long the shuttlecock of both parties. He did not pretend that on all subjects they could possibly meet and agree. That blessed word "protection" would come out. But there were many subjects on which with perfect unanimity they could approach the Minister of the day and show that agriculture was not represented merely by three or four Members of the House. They did not suppose that enormous sums of money were ever likely to be lavished upon them, but they thought there were many grounds for improvement in the department which the hon. Baronet represented. He wished to speak gratefully of the Department of Agriculture. He had had every assistance from the permanent officials and invariably his questions had received a civil answer. They wanted to impress upon the House the importance of this national industry and to show that they did not intend to be outstripped by other nations because they cared more for agriculture than the English nation.

*MR. STANIER (Shropshire, Newport), said he wanted agricultural Members and the Board of Agriculture to help in centralising more the experimental work of the Board; and there was another point on which agriculturists wanted helping, and that was that the orders, circulars, and pamphlets sent out by the Department should be simpler than they were at present. He had heard it said that those circulars ought to be understood by agriculturists and labourers, and he thought that at present the money spent upon them was wasted and might be much better spent. He hoped that the statistics would be quicker and more often brought before agriculturists. The market reports that were brought out every week did not reach him till they were a week old. What was the good of market statistics when they were a week old, and there were other markets on top of them? The report for 4th June was not brought to him till 10th June, and that was absolutely of no use at all. An hon. Member on the other side of the House had mentioned the subject of the diseases of cattle in America. He himself had the pleasure of being in America and Canada last year, and he went to the Board of Agriculture in those countries and was told that they knew nothing about the diseases, but when he went into the country and saw those farms, he not only saw the diseases but read the newspaper reports of those diseases, and for the maintenance and good of this country he did not consider that cattle or other live stock from those countries should be allowed to be brought here.

*MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End) said a good deal had been said about horse-breeding, but he hoped that some of the funds at the disposal of the Board of Agriculture would be devoted to the improvement in the breeds of all kinds of stock in this country. Further, with regard to horse-breeding he would remind the House of the fact that however much was done so far as stallions were concerned it was by no means the fact that the old and so-called worn-out mare was the worst mare to breed from. Some of these old mares threw the best foals. There was, for instance, the case of the winner of the Derby and the Oaks this year, which was bred from an old mare and one that had proved barren for several years previously. In this country, so far as horses were concerned for all purposes, we bred the very best classes; not only our racers, but our shires and our hackneys were superior to those of any other nation of the world, although he was sorry to say the British Government gave less encouragement in this matter than any other civilised nation. He hoped in the future the Government would do more, and that some of the money that had been expended in the past upon lectures at Kew for gardeners who did not attend them would be used for the purposes of breeding. With regard to glanders it was quite possible to stamp out the disease, and he hoped the Government in the future would do something more in the way of giving greater compensation to the man who had a glandered horse, so that he would not try to hide the disease until he could sell his animal and in the meantime spread the disease. Glanders was a filth disease and nothing else. It was a disease from which the thoroughbred never suffered, and the reason for that was that it was always kept in a clean and thoroughly sanitary condition. At Newmarket the only disease which horses were heir to that was not known was glanders. Much had been done by the Health Committee of the London County Council to stamp out this disease, but it was impossible to do it absolutely without the assistance of the Government. He hoped the Government would realise the danger of glanders, and insist upon seeing that stables were kept in a proper and sanitary condition, and then, and then only, would this disease be stamped out. With regard to the importation of cattle from foreign countries, he apprehended he would not be out of order in discussing the question with regard to those countries which had been prohibited by an order of the Board of Agriculture from sending cattle, although he could not discuss the importation of cattle from those countries debarred from entering our markets by legislation. With regard to the former he would like to ask the representative of the Board of Agriculture what was the reason of keeping out the cattle of Norway and Sweden, in which countries there had not been a case of foot-and-mouth disease for the past nineteen years. It must be remembered that the question of the meat supply of this country affected the whole population. The price of meat to-day was a serious consideration to all. We were being "bossed" by the Meat Trust, into whose hands we were playing by keeping out good and healthy meat. It was very easy for agricultural Members to plead for their own districts, and to say, as they honestly believed, that their people were getting better prices for their cattle because we were keeping out cattle which were absolutely sound and healthy from other countries; but they were labouring under an entire misapprehension. What this country was doing by keeping out cattle from continental countries which were free from disease, was simply playing into the hands of the Meat Trust of Chicago. It could be easily and definitely proved that we were at the present moment in the clutch of that octopus-like association with its enormous power and its enormous capital. He hoped it would not be repeated in that House that those who desired to let in cattle of a wholesome character from other countries were against the agricultural districts. That was not true ; they appealed and appealed only for a good, wholesome, and cheap supply of meat, a necessity of life to the people. The present state of affairs, which meant the control and absurd increase in the price of meat, entirely due to the operations of the Meat Trust, was the result of the stupid action of the Board of Agriculture. The position was getting serious, because this enormous corporation in Chicago only used this country as a pawn in the game. It continually kept the supply below the demand in order to keep up prices. They had not only ruined Deptford and Birkenhead by their action, but they were increasing the price of meat to such an extent that they were impairing the health of many in this country. In the working class districts the meat supply was a matter of serious consideration, and it was not upon any narrow lines that he appealed to the hon. Baronet that night. He wanted him to look at this solely from the point of view of what was best for the nation as a whole. He had no desire to suggest to the hon. Baronet that he should allow cattle to come from a contaminated place, but certain countries which could be proved to be free from disease, and with regard to which no danger could exist, should not be prevented from sending their supplies to us. Although he was not there to appeal for the Jewish community, he might say that this question affected them very seriously, because Jews must see their meat killed, and were not allowed to eat meat imported in a frozen state. This industry for the sale of meat was one which, perhaps, more directly than any other, touched the masses of the people, and on behalf of all consumers of meat he urged the Board of Agriculture to do something. He could assure hon. Members representing agricultural constituencies that, in asking for the retention of restrictions, they were playing into the hands of the trust in Chicago.

*MR. WILLS (Dorsetshire, N.) said he desired to bring back the discussion to the question of small holdings. The provision of small holdings was vital to the county he represented if the appalling depopulation there was to be stopped. In that county the farms were large and the wages of the labourers amongst the lowest in England. The agricultural labourer had no career open to him, and unless something could be done by means of the Small Holdings Act to give him some hope of one, the depopulation of the countryside would continue. He made no apology for urging on the hon. Baronet the vital importance of this question. He did not wish to say anything against the county councils. They, like other bodies had a good deal of work to do and generally got little thanks for it. But he did not think some county councillors realised the needs of their constituents in this matter. The reason was they were not in close enough touch with their constituents, a fact admitted recently by a distinguished member of the Dorset County Council. Where county councils were behind-hand they should be urged to greater speed. Those who favoured the Act would welcome the pressure, as it would strengthen their hands. But there were other ways in which the Board could further the Act. One method which he considered most important was by helping co-operative societies. He could not share the fear that these societies would become trusts for the purpose of making large profits out of the small holders. In the first place the rules of each society had to be approved by the Board, and unless the rules prohibited anything but a moderate interest on the capital, the Board would never approve them. In the second place, the whole profit must belong to the co-operating small holders themselves. As a matter of fact, he thought the danger lay the other way—that these societies might not be careful enough to hold sufficient reserve. The power and duty of holding such reserve should be given them. The advantages offered by these societies were in the acquisition of the land as well as in the working of the holdings. It was a fact that many farmers, owing to a mistaken view of their own interests, were strongly opposed to the Act. Many of their labourers rightly or wrongly feared they would be marked men and likely to suffer for it if they came forward in person. Co-operative societies could deal with this difficulty as they could apply for the land in the first place. In the matter of purchase of necessaries for cultivation and disposal of produce, these societies were necessary. Otherwise the small holders could not compete with large farmers in many respects. As he read the Act the Board was able to help these societies under Section 39 (4) and, if it would do so it would be working on the lines of least resistance for the success of the Act.

Mr. BOWERMAN (Deptford) said that, as representing a constituency frequently referred to and one which had been hardly hit by the action, or rather the want of action of the Board of Agriculture, he desired to join in the appeals made by hon. Members on the other side of the House. It had been suggested during the discussion that the Board might devote their energies to the study of the habits of birds. He would suggest that they would be better engaged if they sent a representative over to Deptford to see the result of their action in that district. The matter had been raised several times, but they found the Board as immovable as the Sphinx. Apparently, they were not prepared to do anything, and in that attitude they had the support of the Opposition. What was the result of the policy of the Board? The present Board, it was true, was not responsible for the Order, but they were continuing it; and hundreds of men in Deptford who for many years followed fairly lucrative employment found themselves put outside the market and idle. The other day he asked the hon. Baronet whether any case of foot and mouth disease in this country had been traced to the introduction of live cattle into the Deptford market. The answer was very brief, very important, and very much to the point. It was "No." Why was it, in face of that answer, that the Board continued the Order? It seemed to him illogical. Surely they were not unreasonable or wanting in common sense in asking the Government to allow live cattle to come in from countries officially declared to be free from disease! He believed that the Board had been asked to allow the establishment of an abattoir at Alderney, and that the answer was that although Alderney was divided from us by the sea, yet it was part of the country, and, therefore, the Board were unable favourably to entertain the suggestion. The same boats that took live cattle to Antwerp came here with the hides, and yet when the Board were asked whether they were satisfied that proper care was taken, they said, "Yes." Apparently they were satisfied that proper care was taken by other authorities, but they had little confidence in their own local authorities. He urged the hon. Baronet to ask his own officials at Deptford Market whether the appliances there for dealing with the disease should it make its appearance were not sufficient to prevent its spreading. He thought he would get the answer that the precautions were ample. The hon. Baronet spoke on behalf of the Board and in the name of the Government. The Government was pledged to resist protection mainly on the ground that it would mean an increase in the price of meat. At the same time they declined to allow these cattle to be brought in. What was the result? Figures which had been given in reply to Questions showed that so far as American meat was concerned an increase of something like 1s. 4d. per butchers' stone had taken place within the past five months. There was a growing feeling that here in this free trade country they were allowing a huge trust to be created. Even in a protective country like America the House of Representatives had to appoint a Select Committee to deal with the operations of this particular trust. Although this was a free trade country and opposed to protection, yet the Board of Agriculture by its action was permitting such an increase to take place in the price of meat that unless they were careful there would be stronger representations made to the Government than had hitherto been made in that Chamber. He could only add his appeal to those already made to the hon. Baronet to appoint a Committee to inquire into the matter. If he would give them that small measure of satisfaction he would certainly do good in Deptford; and he could only hope that the outcome would be satisfactory to the Deptford trade, and to the trade in other parts of the country.

MR. MEYSEY THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth) said that although as a farmer he would like to see cheap store cattle brought in large numbers into this country, yet he agreed with the Government that at present, and until he was satisfied that a practical scheme for efficient quarantine regulations had been developed, the risk they would run would be too great to admit of the free importation of live cattle. If they once had foot-and-mouth disease in the country, the rise in the price of meat would be so great that he thought the hon. Gentlemen who now defended the importation of live cattle would agree that it would be wiser to prohibit it. He was glad to see the Chancellor of the Exchequer there that afternoon, because he thought he would back him up when he said that he had always been ready to support any measure that would benefit the country, no matter what party had brought it in. And as he had assisted the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the Patents and Designs Bill, he was equally ready to support any and every Bill which was conducive to the general welfare of his fellow-countrymen. He should like to take the opportunity of saying he met with the greatest courtesy and consideration. He introduced the new clause because he held it conferred great benefits on a very large number of energetic and ingenious people and it was accepted by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and now stood part of the Act. Equally with regard to small holdings he would be only too glad if they could put people back on the land, but it was chiefly a question of finance. The Government said they were going to offer the people land, practically to give them something for nothing. Were they going to bring people out of towns who did not understand the work? In New Zealand that had been tried. He was there at the time. The people were taken out of towns and remained on the land as long as they were subsidised by the Government on the village settlements, and the moment the supply of money ceased they threw up their land, and after great cost had been thrown upon the country the experiment proved a failure, and the people returned to the towns. If they wanted to get people back to the land they must be prepared to pay for it, only let them spend the money in a practical way, and not waste the country's money on schemes which were foredoomed to failure. He would put the people back on the land tomorrow. The plan was quite simple; all they had to do was what they did years ago, when they never let the price of wheat fall below 40s. Let them make it pay and people would go back fast enough. If it did not pay they might go, but they would not stay, and the last state of these men was worse than the first. In New Zealand the artificial bringing back of people to the land was an absolute failure, but the Government could help them enormously by co-operation. Every farmer in certain districts in New Zealand could send his milk into factories subsidised by the Government. That was a practical form of assistance, and was of enormous practical assistance to the farmers. He wished to make a very strong protest against the Agricultural Vote being taken in Whitsun week. They had had a very strong appeal made to them by the Secretary of State for War, asking that landowners and other country people should assist his new scheme by serving in the Territorial Army, and it was most inconvenient for officers of the Territorial Army who were interested in agriculture that this Vote should be put down at Whitsuntide, the very week in the whole year when they were most likely to be in camp for the training of the Territorial units. He appealed to the hon. Gentleman to give his attention to two points—co-operation and the question of experimental farms. He had for some years carried on, at his own expense, a series of experiments, for the improvement of farming methods, especially with regard to grass lands, and the improvement of stock, and he was very glad to do it, but he thought it was worth the while of the Government to give a little attention to such experiments, which might be of great use. If they could see their way to giving some small subsidy he would be very glad to throw open his farm for the purpose, and there were many others who would be only too glad to do the same, and immense benefit would accrue to the country from helping practical men who were carrying out practical experiments in different parts of the country where the farmers could have the opportunity of seeing the result of those experiments themselves. A man might also be kept to show the public over it and explain what they were doing.

Mr. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford) said there was one question which was of very great importance to his constituency and the country generally. He wanted the hon. Baronet to tell them how far the information at the disposal of the Board of Agriculture enabled them to satisfy the fruit-growing districts with regard to the spread of gooseberry mildew. They had had legislation on the question and they were anxious to know how far the Board of Agriculture had been able to grapple with the pest. He wished to enforce one or two points which had been referred to with regard to what he held was far and away the most important Act, or would be if it was worked as he hoped it would be, and as hon. Members opposite said they desired it to be—the Small Holdings Act. He could not think there was a single piece of criticism which, if met frankly and fully, would not tend towards the better working of the Act. There had been, of course, differences of opinion as to how far the Act would be successful. With regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Handsworth, he did not think the Government, and he was sure none of their supporters, had ever said it was possible to take people from the town who knew nothing about the soil and put them on the land. He held very strongly to the idea that it was possible by some practical means to take people back from the towns on to the land. First of all they should try to keep there the people now on the soil in order to prevent migration from the agricultural districts to the towns. If they did that they would accomplish much towards improving the position of things both in the towns and in the agricultural districts. He differed from some of the speakers as to the action that had been taken by the members of county councils in some counties. The county councils had tried to do their best and they had given much time to attempting to put the Act into force. Many of the sub-committees he knew had devoted a considerable amount of time to the work of making inquiries. He knew men who had gone on to those committees a little bit prejudiced, but after they had sat on those committees and made inquiries they had formed the opinion that far and away the vast majority of the applicants were qualified to work small holdings if they could get them, and in many cases they possessed a small amount of capital which they were willing to invest. The one thing they should insist upon was the importance of the co-operative principle contained in the Act of last year. He did not think the putting into force of that principle rested with the Board of Agriculture. In this matter there was a vast power in the hands of the county council. There was the power of distribution of the produce—which was the main thing—without the county councils incurring any heavy cost. He was prepared to go with the members of the county council to the Board of Agriculture and ask them to spend some of that £100,000 which they possessed in experiments both with regard to the power of distribution and the setting up of experimental small holdings. If they all threw themselves into the working of this new Act the result would be beneficial to the working classes of the country. In conclusion he wished to place on record his appreciation of the good work which the county councils had done and were doing.

*Mr. WINFREY (Norfolk, S. W.) congratulated the Government upon giving a day for the discussion of this important question. The question of horse-breeding had been referred to. He believed the Board of Agriculture were extremely anxious to encourage the breeding of horses in this country, but the Committee should remember that the Royal Commission had had at their disposal for some years past the sum of £5,000 a year for this purpose, although it was questionable whether the best use had been made of that money. A good many Members on the Opposition side of the House were inclined to think that the Royal Commission had not used that money to the best advantage. That Commission came to the Board of Agriculture and practically asked for a blank cheque they asked for a further sum of £20,000 without having decided up to now upon any scheme for its expenditure. He did not think the Government would be wise in making such a grant to any Royal Commission until some definite practical scheme had received, at any rate the assent and approval of the President of the Board of Agriculture. He had the honour of hearing the members of the deputation who waited upon the President of the Board of Agriculture when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon suggested that a horse-breeding establishment should be established at Hampton Court, but that suggestion was laughed out of court by the Commission. About twelve speeches were made, and no two of them were in entire agreement in regard to the scheme which ought to be adopted. The most practical scheme was the one put forward by the official of the Irish Board of Agriculture, but there was no general agreement amongst the Commission as to what should be done to improve the breeding of horses. Under those circumstances it was quite evident that it would not be politic to give a further grant to the Royal Commission until they had agreed upon a scheme. He thought it would be much better to place the whole matter in the hands of the President of the Board of Agriculture and let him devise a scheme with the aid of the officials of his Department. With regard to the debate upon small holdings he thought the criticism which had been made would serve a useful purpose. For his own part he had watched very closely what had been going on during the last five months, and he did not think they could complain of the want of action of any county council throughout the country. He was agreeably surprised at the substantial progress which had been made in a good many counties. In his own county of Norfolk he was told only yesterday that land to the amount of 25,000 acres had been applied for, and for settling schemes the small holdings committee had had to travel all over the county, hold forty or fifty inquiries, and settle arrangements for some 500 parishes. One scheme had been approved and others would be settled by Michaelmas, and he did not think that in five months more progress could have been made. He did not think that the criticisms of the hon. Member for Mid. Oxford were deserved, certainly so far as his own county was concerned. He hoped that in the course of the present year further progress would be made in establishing co-operative societies throughout the country. There again he said it was wise to move with caution. He thought progress would be made more rapidly if they took all the circumstances into consideration. He congratulated the hon. Baronet on the progress which had been made in connection with the work under the Small Holdings Act.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY replied on the various points raised during the discussion. In answer to the hon. Member for the Ashford division he described the steps taken when an outbreak of disease occurred and an area was declared infected, and reminded the hon. Member that in regard to compensation the Board was bound by a limit. With the stamping out of sheep scab progress was being made, if not so rapid as was desired. The Board were hopeful that the terrible disease of glanders would soon be stamped out. He was afraid that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer's view as to compensation would not be different from that taken by his predecessor, which was that it ought to be a matter for the local authorities themselves. It was impossible to say, till the season was further advanced, whether the cases of gooseberry mildew would be fewer than those of last year; but up to now only twenty-eight outbreaks had been reported. Three inspectors had been appointed under the Act passed last session; and, the Board being fully alive to the importance of stamping out gooseberry mildew, no effort on their part to that end would be wanting. With regard to the action or alleged inaction of the Board of Agriculture in reference to the Small Holdings Act, if there were many who felt that the county councils had not been active, it was easy to bring the matter before the Board, on whose behalf he promised that there would be a sympathetic ear given to any complaint and a readiness to inquire would not be wanting. He was informed by the Commissioners that the Oxford County Council were doing everything that was possible. They had had 672 applications for 11,000 acres of land; eighteen local inquiries had been held, and five remained to be held. They had shown their desire to put the Act in force by the appointment of a land agent at £400 a year and £150 in addition for his travelling expenses, to assist them in putting the Act into operation.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: Who will pay for this expenditure? Will it come out of the rates or will the poor labourers have to pay for it in their rent?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said that that would depend on how the salary was allotted. If the salary was for general management, like an estate agent's, and if a large quantity of land was applied for and granted, as he hoped it would be, to the labourers, the proportion which would be charged on each holding for management would be a very small amount. As had already been said, there was not going to be any charity rent. Every man would have to pay a commercial rent. His hon. friend seemed to think that there should be a charity rent.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: No.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said the transaction would be carried through on business principles. The right hon. Gentleman said that he had stated that no labourer who was a poor man could get land. It would be in the recollection of the House that he had stated quite the contrary. What he had said was that speaking from a practical point of view he would prefer to let land to an efficient agricultural labourer with a small capital than to many a man who came from a town and who had capital equal to ten pounds an acre.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS said he was sure his hon. friend did not wish to misrepresent him. He had quoted a statement of the hon. Baronet that a labourer must have some small capital—that was one of the qualifications for a small holding—and he further said that a labourer without capital of any kind, however capable he might be, was barred out by the Act.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said he could not understand how the right hon. Gentleman should misunderstand him. The Act did not bar out a labourer without capital, but how was he with no capital going to take ten, twenty, or thirty acres of land? That was impossible. What the Government hoped, and what he trusted county councils would assist in securing, was that men who had no capital would be able to rent land through the agency of co-operative societies. There had been no unnecessary delay in putting the Act into operation. It had been the object of the Board and of county councils to forward the working of the Act in every possible way, and to get men on to the land. It was not possible, under the Act, as asserted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bordesley Division of Birmingham, for land to be let to commercial bodies whose object, as he had said, was to pay dividends of 20 per cent. with money wrung out of the unfortunate labourers. The Board of Agriculture would take good care that these associations were put under rules which would prevent them paying more than 5 per cent., and provide that any profit above that amount must be applied to the advantage of those working the particular land let to them. The college at Cirencester had not received a grant, because it was a private institution carried on for profit, and was not eligible for a grant. If, as he understood, certain alterations were being made in the constitution of that body, and application were made for a grant, he was sure it would be favourably considered by the President of the Board of Agriculture. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had heard the various appeals which had been made for increased grants from the Treasury towards agricultural education, and he need, therefore, say no more on that subject, except to express his conviction that the object had the full sympathy of his right hon. friend, as it had his. In regard to the question which had been asked as to how milk was dealt with in the Netherlands during an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Board of Agriculture had nothing to do with milk or any dairy product imported into this country. Any question relating to that subject should be addressed to the President of the Local Government Board. He might say, however, that he was told by friends whom he visited in the Netherlands that milk was sterilised there before being consumed in that country, but he had no official information on the point. It had been said that fruit culture was impossible except where occupiers were owners of the soil. The Government had done their best under the Act passed last year to give opportunities to men who wished to become owners to realise their desire, and the Act of 1902 had not been repealed. A great majority of small holders, however, wished to live upon the soil without undertaking the responsibilities of ownership, and speaking as an agriculturist himself, he thought they were thoroughly sound in their preference for the Act of 1907. He could assure his hon. friend the Member for East Northants that the two Commissioners had done a great deal. They had been to every county in England and Wales and were in constant communication with the county councils, bringing questions before them and grievances which might be remedied. The hon. Baronet might rest assured that the Commissioners were fully occupied, and were doing their best to forward the operation of the Act. The object of Clause 16 of the Act was to enable the Board of Agriculture to provide small holdings in any particular district in which a county council thought the establishment of such holdings impossible, and to enable the Board to show the practicability of such provision being made. Hon. Gentlemen had spoken of the £100,000 as if it had been voted for use only up to 31st March, and ought to have been spent by then. It was simply voted as a lump sum to be placed at the disposal of the Board for the purposes of the Act and had not to be refunded if not spent before the 31st March last. It had been paid into the Small Holdings Account, and remained there to be drawn on until it was exhausted. Although no money had been actually spent a great deal of it had been mortgaged for schemes already sanctioned or about to be approved. The right hon. Member for Wimbledon had complained of the deficiency of the horse supply. That matter was now being fully considered by the Board of Agriculture and the War Office, but the time was not yet ripe for any statement to be made in the House. He could assure the Committee that the question was being very carefully considered by the Secretary of State for War in conjunction with the President of the Board of Agriculture. The right hon. Gentleman had advocated the constitution of haras. That was a moot point, and gentlemen like Lord Donoughmore, Sir Walter Gilbey, and other experts on horse-breeding rather took the opposite view to the right hon. Gentleman, and objected strongly to the establishment of haras. No scheme had been submitted by the Commission. There was no practical proposal, but only a declaration as to the great necessity of maintaining their sources of horse supply. It would have been more practical if the Commission had submitted a concrete scheme which could have been considered by the Board of Agriculture. With regard to the meat trust, it had been suggested that it had had the effect of increasing the price of meat. It had done nothing of the kind. One of its effects had been to reduce the number of live cattle imported into this country and to increase the amount of dead meat. It was clearly more economical to bring over from America dead meat to this country in the form of chilled beef than to import live animals. The natural tendency of an organisation of this kind was to eliminate the middle man and to bring meat over in the cheapest possible way, and to sell it at the cheapest possible price. Instead of the price of meat being high, it was less than before the meat trust was set up. With regard to the wages of the young gardeners at Kew, these young men went there under special conditions. They must be unmarried, and they were limited to two years' service, the object being that as large a number as possible might get the advantage of the training and lectures given there. The fact that they were only taken for two years showed that it was not regarded as permanent employment, but as affording a large number the advantage of the experience gained at Kew. The whole question resolved itself into this: Was it worth the while of young men to go to Kew? They went not merely for the purpose of earning wages; and, if they wanted a permanent place, they would not go to Kew. The 21s. per week was given to them, not as wages but as subsistence allowance; and they had to take into consideration the many advantages they obtained from being at Kew two years. They got certificates and received a training which equipped them for better positions. A very large number of them did get better positions. Generally speaking, 22 per cent. of the men passing through Kew obtained official and other good posts throughout the country or abroad carrying good pay. The gardener, as a class, was, he thought, generally not overpaid, and as a rule the young men coming to Kew and getting 21s. were receiving a great deal more than if they went out as under-gardeners unmarried, between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four. Taking this into consideration and remembering that as a result of their putting in two years' study at Kew they were able to get very much better positions and pay than they would if they remained under ordinary conditions of gardening, he thought they could not be said to be underpaid. If the hon. Member thought it was an undesirable system that young men should go to Kew for two years, it was quite open to him to argue that they ought to have gardeners employed at Kew at higher wages—25s. to 30s. or even more per week; but there would then probably be a reduction, and the young men would certainly suffer. If they took into consideration the conditions under which the young men were employed, and had regard to the standard rate of wages of under-gardeners, and remembered that the 21s. was only given as subsistence allowances, he thought it could not be said that they were underpaid.

Mr. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) said the hon. Baronet had had a good many points to answer, and he did not think it could be said that he had answered all of them to the satisfaction of the House. He read the report of a speech made by the hon. Baronet at an agricultural meeting the other day, in which he spoke of the drastic measures taken by the Board to stamp out swine fever. He wanted to know whether he really thought the measures now introduced by the Board were more drastic and likely to be of a more permanent advantage than those hitherto taken. He had explained that the Board had the power to declare only one section of a farm an infected area. A farmer might, therefore, move some of his infected pigs say from a horse box to a pigsty without the knowledge of the Inspector of the Board, and the Inspector might declare the pigsty an infected area, and leave the horse box outside. He could not see how a regulation of that kind could be said to be of a more drastic character.

Mr. SUMMERBELL rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the Chairman withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Mr. HICKS BEACH said he failed to see how the hon. Baronet could reconcile the present procedure with the speech he recently made at an agricultural meeting.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

DEBATES REPORTS.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in making the arrangements for an official Report of Debates.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 12th June, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Great Western Railway Bill [Lords], read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill, "to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water," presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered under (Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Monday, 22nd June, and to be printed. [Bill 262.]

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Norwich, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Westbury, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Glasgow; and Norwich; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Burghead; Glasgow (two); Hereford; Ipswich; Kirkmichael; Lincoln; Norwich; Penzance; Ponder's End; Renfrew; Runcorn; Sheringham; Stafford; Tideswell; and, Wimbledon; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF CARNARVON).

Copy presented, of order made by the Council of the County of Carnarvon dividing the middle Llandwrog Parliamentary Polling district into two separate districts [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CRIMINAL AND JUDICIAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Criminal and Judicial Statistics of Ireland for the year 1907. Part II. Civil Statistics [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Medway Conservancy, Copy of Statement of Receipts and Expenditure of the conservators for the year ending 25th March, 1908 [by Act].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Cautionary Letter issued to Friendly Societies.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause to be circulated with the Votes the cautionary letter promised to be issued by the Registrar of Friendly Societies to friendly societies, and the similar letter promised to be issued by the Board of Trade to insurance companies; and whether he will say if the latter has been sent to all insurance companies.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I will arrange to have copies of the letters circulated with the Votes, as suggested by the hon. Member. The letter from the Board of Trade will be sent to all insurance companies.

Preservatives in Milk and Dairy Produce.

Sir FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board when he will introduce the Milk Bill; and whether the Bill will include provisions further restricting the use of preservatives in milk and dairy products, and to secure more effectually the total exclusion of deleterious preservatives from milk and dairy products.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I cannot at present fix a date for the introduction of the Bill, and I am afraid I cannot state beforehand what will be the contents of the measure.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Annual Leave in the Civil Service.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Order in Council of 15th August, 1890, laid down that the rules as to annual leave for co-ordinate classes in different Departments of the Civil Service should be uniform; whether the Treasury, in a circular letter dated 6th June, 1905, pointed out that the power of granting such leave rests with the heads of Departments; whether the period of annual leave allowable to officers not classed as higher division, and earning a maximum salary exceeding £350 but not exceeding £500 a year, was to be thirty-six working days; whether this period is allowed to such officers in Government offices other than in the Post Office; and, if so, why it is not allowed in the Post Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Clause 7 of the Order in Council of 15th August, 1890, only prescribed the maximum amount of leave allowable to officers coming under its provisions. The Answer to the second and third Questions is in the affirmative, except that the circular of 6th June, 1905, only said that the annual leave in the particular cases referred to should not exceed thirty-six days. I have no information as to the actual leave granted by the Post Office or other Departments under this power.

Delay in Erection of a Labourer's Cottage at Letterkenny.

MR. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Local Government Board has been called to the delay of the Letterkenny Rural Council, East Donegal, in building a cottage for Robert M'Geehan, Balleighan, on a site selected by them for him in July, 1906, which site was visited by the Local Government Board inspector, and approved of by him in February, 1907; whether he can state what is the cause of the delay or refusal to provide a cottage for M'Geehan under the Labourers Act; and whether he can say why there have been no cottages built in the Balleighan part of the union, though many applications were made to the rural district council for them.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are informed by the clerk of the Letterkenny Rural District Council that the conveyance of the site of the cottage intended for Robert M'Geehan has only recently been completed, and that the council have issued advertisements inviting tenders for the erection of this and two other cottages in the townland of Balleighan.

Army—Length of Service with Colours and Reserve.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): To ask the Secretary of State for War what are the present terms of service, length of time with the colours, and in the Reserve, for horse and field artillery, cavalry of the Line, foot guards, and infantry of the Line.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The present terms of service are as follows:—

	Colours.	Reserve.
Cavalry of Line - -	7	5
Horse and field artillery	6	6
Foot guards - -	3	9
Infantry of Line -	7	5

The hon. Member will find all this information on page 50A of the General Annual Report (Cd. 3798).

Disbanding of Territorial Battalions of Strength below 30 per cent.

MR. CARR-GOMM (Southwark, Rotherhithe): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether a battalion of the Territorial Force which is less than 30 per cent. of its establishment on 30th June will be disbanded; if it is disbanded what regulations will be put in force for the permanent staff, the officers, the non-commissioned officers, and the men; if it is not disbanded will the establishment of officers, permanent staff, and sergeants be reduced; and what sum of money will then be allowed for training.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) No battalion which is less than 30 per cent. of its establishment on 30th June will be disbanded, and no reduction will be made in its establishment. No expenditure of public money is, however, permissible for training until the battalion has reached the required numbers.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Public Rights of Way Bill): Colonel Seely; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Berridge.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) Repeal Bill): Mr. Horniman; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Beck.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Children Bill): Mr. Butcher, Sir Edwin Cornwall, Mr. Rainy, Mr. Willes, and Mr. Soares; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Henry Gooch, Mr. Alden, Mr. Silcock, Mr. Howard and Mr. Horniman.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. Llewellyn Williams; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill); Mr. Leif Jones.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Sir Frank Edwards; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Charles O'Donnell.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

PREVENTION OF CRIME BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): I desire to say a few words in reference to this Bill for several reasons. First of all, I would say that we are not in opposition to the Bill, and I think something must be done in the direction indicated. I am further interested in the matter by having myself introduced a Bill—the Penal Servitude Bill—some four years ago, which had for its object very much the same as Part II. of the present Bill. The objects of the present Bill, I think, are desirable objects. They are to stop the young criminal at his earliest stages to try and bring him back to an honest method of life, and at the same time to free society of the presence in their midst of habitual criminals, who are beyond reclamation, at all events until and unless they have given practical proof that they are likely to prove themselves reformed characters, and intend to lead an honest and useful life. This Bill is divided strictly into two parts. The first part of the Bill is to provide for the reformation of young offenders, and I think that is a subject which is not likely to prove at all controversial in this House. It follows the line of recent legislation—the Probation Act and the Children Bill now before the House. It provides a scheme for dealing with young offenders up to twenty-one years of age in a Borstal institution. I think the House thoroughly recognises the usefulness of the Borstal system, the object of which is to make every young prisoner able and willing to work when he is again free, and to secure that result by giving him careful instruction, both moral and educational, by specially selected officers, and by training on the farm, or in workshops, or in building yards. In fact, the object aimed at is to teach every lad some useful industry and to give him some practical knowledge of gardening or agricultural work, or of some trade such as will enable him to get work and honestly maintain himself on leaving prison. This Bill proposes to set up State reformatories, to establish permanently the Borstal system, and to enable a Court, where a young person of from 16 to 21 years of age is convicted, and where by reason of his antecedents or mode of life it is clearely expedient that he should be subject to detention for such term or under such instruction and discipline as appears most conducive to his reformation, to sentence him to a term of not less than three years in a Borstal institution. The Bill further provides, and I think usefully and necessarily provides, a power of giving alternative sentences. It is somewhat a novel proposal, but it is a necessary one if you are going to carry out the object of the Bill, because it is difficult, if not impossible, for a Court to have full knowledge, at the time it passes sentence, of the characteristics of an offender, of his health, of his mental condition, or of the proper treatment to be applied to him. Therefore the Bill wisely provides that the Court shall pronounce an alternative sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment which the prisoner should undergo if he is found unfit for a Borstal institution or the treatment carried on there. The Prison Commissioners, after considering no doubt the Reports of the Borstal Committee, I take it, will direct the attention of the Home Secretary to the cases of incorrigibles, and those of such bad character whose presence would have a demoralising effect on those who are clearly reformable in the Borstal institution. The Home Secretary can then at once, before mischief is done, order prisoner to undergo his alternative sentence in a convict establishment or ordinary prison, as the case may be. This I welcome because it is in accordance with the modern treatment of young offenders for whose care both sides of the House in recent years have had great regard. The power given under Clause 4 to permit the discharge after six months, on licence, of a young prisoner on condition that he is placed under the supervision of some society or person who will take proper and effective charge of his case with a view to his reformation and fresh start in life, I think also is a proposal which the House will welcome. I would like, however, to ask one or two questions of the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill with regard to this part of the measure. First of all as to the extension of Clause 1 by subsection (3) (*b*), is there any qualification as to age; is this subsection governed by the age of 16 to 21, or does it apply to older prisoners who, in the opinion of the Prison Commissioners, are suitable for the Borstal treatment? Then I would like to ask the Home Secretary whether he has formed any opinion as to the number of institutions which it will be necessary to found in order to carry out the proposals of the Bill. If my memory serves me, we have now the establishment at Borstal, a branch at Lincoln, and a branch at Dartmoor, but I do not think there are any other prisons where this Borstal system is carried out. It may be necessary, if this Bill meets with the success which I hope it will meet with, that the number of prisons which can be adapted for this purpose will have to be increased. At all events, I think it desirable, as far as we can, to place these prisoners together, and it would be much easier for the purposes of administration than setting aside some portion of a prison in which they could be housed. I will also ask whether these institutions will be governed by the rules now laid down for the carrying on of the prison at Borstal, or whether the Home Secretary has new and revised rules in contemplation, and if so whether we may be able to see the proposed rules at some further stage of the Bill. I would like to ask the meaning of Clause 5, which says that where a person may be incorrigible or exercising a bad influence on the other inmates of the Institutions, the Home Secretary may commute the unexpired residue of his term to such term of imprisonment, with or without hard labour, as the Secretary of State may determine, but in no case exceeding the unexpired residue. Does this mean that the Secretary of State can cause a prisoner to be discharged from Borstal and undergo the alternative sentence passed by the Judge originally, or can he on his own account sentence the prisoner to a term of imprisonment, with or without hard labour? I think it is an important point, and if the Home Secretary has those entirely new powers it may want some further consideration. Now as to Part II. of the Bill, a portion of the Bill of which I have had some great experience, because as I say some four years ago I introduced a Bill to the same effect, and very much on the same lines, a Bill which was carried in this House through its second reading, although it did not then receive the support of the hon. Gentleman opposite, but I trust that with the change of sides the hon. Members may accept the principle now, seeing that they think it is in safer hands than it was four years ago. I have not changed my opinions, and I shall support the Bill now as I supported my own measure four years ago. The second part of this Bill seeks to provide a more effective method of dealing with criminals who wilfully persist in crime. All who have studied this question know that there are a number of habitual criminals who, whether their sentences are long or short, invariably return to crime almost as soon as they are released from prison. On such criminals it appears that no ordinary sentence, whether long or short, has any deterrent or reformatory effect. You may send them to prison as often as you like, and you may give them what sentences you please, but the experience of the past has been that it has practically no effect upon them. This was constantly brought to my notice when at the Home Office some years ago. I was looking this morning at some notes made then of cases in point, and if I may, I will give the House an example or two. Here I have the case of a man who served eight sentences—five of penal servitude and three of a minor character. This man out of twenty-nine years had served twenty-five years in prison, and when finally released on license, within a few days had committed two other burglaries, for which he went back to penal servitude for seven years. Here is another case of a man who had twelve convictions in five years, and was again in trouble within a week or two of his release. I do not think it necessary to trouble the House with further cases of this sort, because everyone agrees that there are unfortunately these habitual criminals, and that they require some special treatment, and hardly a day passes on which hon. Members do not for themselves see in the columns of the Press cases of the character which I have just mentioned. When I was at the Home Office, I had some statistics taken out for me with respect to hardened criminals and repeated convictions. Here they are. On a given day in 1901, I found that there were in prison 2,579 convicts; of these 2,244, or 77 per cent., had against them previous convictions, including 1,342, or 47 per cent., with previous terms of penal servitude against them. This was the state of things on a day taken entirely by chance, and I understand that the proportion of prisoners with repeated convictions is certainly not diminishing at the present time, and it seems to me that if you could do something further to detain your hardened and habitual criminal, you would do much to lessen your criminal calendars at both assizes and quarter sessions. The present Prime Minister, in 1894, when he was Home Secretary, appointed a strong Committee to inquire into prison administration. The right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary was Chairman of that Committee, which included the present Secretary of State for War; an hon. Gentleman who is no longer a Member of the House and now a County Court Judge, Sir Arthur O'Connor; the present Chief Magistrate, Sir A. De Rutzen; and Sir John Dorington, for many years a Member of this House who only ceased to be so at the last election. This Committee was specially charged to inquire and report upon various matters connected with prison administration, but to their labours was added this particular reference, "the prison treatment of habitual criminals." I should like the House to let me for a moment refer them to the Report of these Gentlemen, because it says very much more shortly and very much more effectively than I can, how necessary it is to deal with this class of criminals. This is what they say, and hon. Members will find it on Page 31 of the Report of the Committee on Prisons, 1895, under the heading "Habitual Criminals":—

> "There is evidently a large class of habitual criminals—who live by robbery and thieving and petty larceny—who run the risk of comparatively short sentences with comparative indifference. They make money rapidly by crime, they enjoy life after their fashion, and then, on detection and conviction, serve their time quietly, with the full determination to revert to crime when they come out. We are inclined to believe that the bulk of habitual criminals at large are composed of men of this class. When an offender has been convicted a fourth time or more he or she is pretty sure to have taken to crime as a profession and sooner or later to return to prison. We are, therefore, of opinion that further corrective measures are desirable for these persons. When under sentence they complicate prison management—when at large they are responsible for the commission of the greater part of the undetected crime; they are a nuisance to the community. To punish them for the particular offence is almost useless; the real offence is the wilful persistence in the deliberately acquired habit of crime. We venture to offer the opinion that a new form of sentence should be placed at the disposal of the Judges by which the offenders might be segregated for long periods of detention, during which they would not be treated with the severity of first-class hard labour or penal servitude, but would be forced to work under less onerous conditions. As loss of liberty would to them prove eventually the chief

deterrent, so by their being removed from the opportunity of doing wrong the community would gain."

That is the Report of this Committee, which I think is entitled, seeing its composition, to the peculiar regard of this House. It was on the Report of [that Committee that I introduced a Bill in this House which had the same object as this Bill, and I think it must be on that Report of the right hon. Gentleman's Committee that this particular Bill has been founded, or at all events Part II. of it, which we are now discussing. It is quite clear that if you do arrange to segregate this class of offender, the habitual criminal, you will not only lessen crime but you will lessen the opportunity of this class of criminal to teach crime to others. The habitual criminal is not only himself a danger to society, but he acts as a tempter and very often as a tutor to young people to indulge in criminal life. I think it very desirable that this class of criminal should be punished not more severely than he is at the present time, because experience shows that severity of punishment in itself does not tend to reform or even to deter him, but that he should be kept for longer periods in detention, subject to a mild discipline, or, if it were possible, to some form of labour, doing a certain amount of useful work, and being prevented from following what he had made his calling, namely, preying upon his fellow citizens. I think hon. Members will agree with me in this principle, that sentences should be first of all punitive, secondly, that they should be reformatory, and, thirdly, that they should be deterrent or preventive. If you believe the evidence given before the Committee whose Report I have just read, I think it may be assumed that it has been proved that the first two principles have failed to be effective, and, therefore, if you are to deal successfully with the habitual criminal you must increase the preventive treatment. That is what I really want to see, and power should be given to the Judges in their sentences to fit the criminal as well as to fit the crime. The Judge should have power to award such a sentence as will keep the confirmed criminal not only out of temptation, but prevent him from preying upon his fellow-citizens. Judges, I think, are loth, perhaps rightly loth, to pass long and severe sentences and to inflict heavy punishments, chiefly because of the rigour and severity of the conditions of penal servitude. I think you should give them by statute, as you would give them if this Bill becomes law, power to direct that a portion of the sentence which they pass should be carried out under the modified conditions. You would secure longer sentences in such cases, you would greatly lessen the amount of crime recorded in your criminal statistics, and you would greatly lighten that very heavy load which is placed on the police force of this country which was so emphasised by the Home Secretary when he introduced this Bill. For the reasons I have given I propose to give my support to the Second Reading of the Bill. At the same time, I think there are certain Amendments which it may be very desirable to consider favourably, if not to adopt, when the Bill comes before Committee upstairs. Our chief object should be to consider whether proper safeguards have been inserted in the Bill. I am bound to admit, on reading the Bill through very carefully, that the right hon. Gentleman and the Home Office generally have shown great care in this respect. The Bill provides in every case where the charge is made against a prisoner that he is an habitual criminal, that such charge shall be separately stated in the indictment. The jury must be satisfied that the prisoner had been convicted at least three times previously. That is clearly following the Report of the Committee of 1894. It has further to be proved that at the date of his committal he had been leading a persistently dishonest and criminal life; and, further, there is a provision that the charge of his being an habitual criminal, and therefore liable to this treatment, should not be made except with the consent of the Public Prosecutor, and not until after seven days notice. Further, as the Home Secretary pointed out on introducing the Bill, the prisoner has an unqualified right of appeal. Then there is also the safeguard that the Home Secretary has to consider his case at least once in three years. The prisoner when he is undergoing this term of detention, over and above his original sentence, would be under the supervision of a special board of visitors. A special Committee would be appointed to consider at regular periods the prisoner's conduct; and further, the Secretary of State would have the power to order his discharge on probation, subject to the condition that he was to be placed under the supervision of a competent society or person. I think the right hon. Gentleman has in view the placing of these men under the charge of the Salvation Army or some body of that character. The Salvation Army have certainly done very useful work in the past in watching over criminals and endeavouring to find them a new start in life. I think that the Bill is well safeguarded in those respects. I do not think it should be held that there will be any unfairness or any hardship inflicted under this Bill upon a man who is an habitual criminal; at all events he will not have it sprung upon him. Careful safeguards are laid down as to previous convictions, and further modifications may be necessary in Committee, but I think the principle of the Bill is very sound, and that it ought to be accepted by the House The Bill, after it has been in Committee upstairs, and has been carefully considered and amended, I think will prove a useful, effective, and, I will go further and say, humane addition to the criminal procedure of the country. On those grounds I propose myself to support the Second Reading of the Bill, and I trust the Home Secretary will be fortunate enough to secure its passage.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said the first part of this Bill was for the extension and regularisation of the Borstal system, which would be warmly welcomed in all quarters; and the second part was to introduce into this country a system of indeterminate sentences. For his own part, although he did not altogether like these proposals, yet after very careful consideration he thought that a case had been made out for them. He thought, also, that the prospect of prolonged detention would act as a deterrent, and therefore he was willing to accept this as an experiment. He did so, he confessed, with considerable reluctance and with some misgiving. While accepting the main objects of the Bill, there were provisions in it which seemed to be open to grave exception. The distinguishing characteristic of the Bill was the extraordinary extent of the powers conferred upon the executive Department. It had been noticeable in recent legislation that there was a strong tendency to confer very great powers on Government Departments. Some of them had not welcomed those provisions altogether with favour, but when the same system was carried into the sphere of the Court of law then he thought it was time to cry "Halt." Let him give the House one or two illustrations of what he meant. It was provided by this Bill that the Court, upon a prisoner being convicted before it upon indictment, might sentence him, if he was sixteen years of age and under twenty-one, to detention for a period of not less than one year and not exceeding three years in a Borstal institution. But whenever the Court passed such a sentence the Bill required it at the same time to pass an alternative sentence upon him. Now, as the right hon. Gentleman opposite had said, that, so far as he knew, was an entirely novel principle to introduce into our criminal law. He did not think in the first place that it was fair to the Court. It was not fair to ask the Court, or to compel the Court to consider and pronounce a sentence which might never take effect. In the second place, it was not fair to the prisoner, because it would be obvious that a sentence passed under such circumstances would not receive that careful consideration which might be presumed to be given in ordinary cases. But it was still more extraordinary to give to a department of the Government the power to set aside the sentence which the Court considered to be most appropriate in the particular case. Might he point out to the House how comprehensive was the power which the Bill gave to the Government Department?

> "If it appears to the Secretary of State on the report of the Prison Commissioners that owing to the character, state of health, or mental condition of the offender, or otherwise, it is not advisable to send the offender to a Borstal institution,"

then the sentence passed by the Court might be set aside. Surely there ought to be very strong compelling reasons for such a provision as that. What were the reasons which the Home Secretary gave to the House on the introduction of the Bill? They were these. He quoted the right hon. Gentleman's own words—

> "The Courts cannot have full knowledge of the characteristics of an offender, or his fitness for the special treatment and training provided in such an institution."

But Clause 1 was concerned with the stage before the prisoner had been sent to a Borstal institution at all. There was, however, Clause 5, for which there was excellent reason. If after the offender had been sent to the Borstal institution he was found to be incorrigible, or what was worse, producing a bad influence upon the other inmates, power was given to the Secretary of State which he thought might very well be given to him. But what he was dealing with was the earlier stage before the prisoner had been sent to the Borstal institution at all. At that stage it was quite possible for the Court to be placed in possession of all the information which the Home Secretary or the Prison Commissioners themselves had. At present when a prisoner had been convicted the Judge asked what was known about him, and an officer stated his antecedents and generally the character of the prisoner. It would be quite possible, therefore, at that stage of the case, to give the Court all the information necessary to decide whether or not the prisoner was a fit subject for the Borstal institution. If necessary, the prisoner could be put back and examined with regard to the state of his health and his mental condition, as was often done now, and then the Court would finally decide whether or not it should pass sentence of detention in a Borstal institution. There was, therefore, in practice no necessity for giving this very extraordinary power to the Home Secretary. But there was one curious feature about this provision. It seemed to imply that a prisoner who was not fit for the Borstal institution might yet be fit for prison. That was a curious anomaly. At the present time a very large number of persons served their time in prison who were suffering from mental disease although they would not perhaps be certified for a lunatic asylum. The Commissioners themselves said that three per cent. of the total inmates of prisons were suffering from mental disease. He protested against the supposition that a person who was unfit for a Borstal institution might yet be fit for prison. The Bill seemed to recognise and regularise the committal to prison of persons who were mentally deficient and suffering from mental disease. But there was a still more extraordinary power given to a Government Department to alter the age of those who were eligible for Borstal. Why should any Government Department have a power of that kind? It was for Parliament to decide what was a suitable age for those who were sent to this new institution. Actually also power was given to the Secretary of State by order to extend the section to persons who were summarily convicted of an indictable offence. They were actually empowering the Secretary of State to authorise a couple of country Justices in Petty Sessions to sentence a personage of any age to undergo three years detention in a Borstal institution. He might be conservative in his views of the criminal law, but he thought to give such a power to a Government department was outrageous. As he understood the second part of the Bill, a sentence of penal servitude would be a condition precedent to a further sentence of preventive detention. That was undoubtedly desirable in the case of the dangerous class of criminal—armed burglars for instance—but there was a large class of habitual criminals who were not dangerous at all, and in their case it would be inappropriate and undesirable. There was another class of persons who did not come within the provisions of the Bill at all, that class of which the last Report of the Prison Commissioners gave an example—a man who had had 113 known convictions, nine last year, mainly for begging. What were they to do with a man of that kind? Clearly that was a class of person who ought to be dealt with, but they did not come within the provisions of the Bill at all. The crucial part of the Bill was the constitution of the body which was to have the right to decide when, if ever, these criminals might be set at liberty. The Bill practically gave the real power to the Board of Directors of Convict Prisons. It provided that they were to be assisted by a committee at each prison, but the committees were only to make such reports as might be necessary for the assistance of the Directors. He did not think, with all respect to these gentlemen, that the Directors of Convict Prisons were a body in whom the public would feel full confidence for the discharge of a duty of this terribly responsible kind. He thought the committee and not the Directors of Convict Prisons ought to have the power. As the Bill was drawn each committee would consist exclusively of persons nominated by the Secretary of State. He thought there ought to be introduced into a body of this kind a representative element, and he would suggest, merely provisionally, that it might be possible to provide that members of the county council, appointed by that body, should serve upon the committee. It might also be desirable that a Judge of the High Court should be a member of the committee. There ought to be a judicial element, and he would suggest whether it might not be the going Judge of Assize who should in each case be a member of the committee to which these powers were given. By ancient practice the Judge of Assize was directed to deliver the jails, and perhaps he might take a part in releasing these inmates of the new institution who might be set at liberty. He proposed to support the Second Reading, but he respectfully asked that the objections which he had urged might receive consideration.

*MR. CLAVELL SALTER (Hants, Basingstoke) said the proposals of this Bill were undoubtedly interesting and important, and the speech to which they had just listened was sufficient of itself to show that the questions raised by the Bill were exceedingly delicate and difficult and gave rise to a great deal of difference of opinion. The Bill dealt with personal liberty in a manner which was most novel and drastic and which undoubtedly ought to, and would, receive most careful and anxious consideration. The Bill would have a very wide application. When they had dealt at one end of the scale with juvenile criminals, and at the other with habitual offenders, they would have dealt with a very large proportion of the indictable crimes in the country. The powers given were very large. In the case of the young power was given to substitute for the present short time of preventive imprisonment, a very much longer term of reformatory treatment, during which the young person at the most critical period of his life was to be taken away from his home and from the calling on which he had probably just entered. In the case of the habitual criminal powers were given which might amount, if not to life-long detention, to life-long deprivation of liberty, and, what to his mind was hardly less important, these powers were being confided indiscriminately to new hands. Hitherto it had not been possible to deprive any man of his liberty for the residue of his life except by a sentence of penal servitude which could only be passed in cases of the gravest crime by the most experienced and responsible Judges. Those enormous powers were to be given indiscriminately to the Chairmen of Quarter Sessions and to Recorders. The Bill would also impose a still further expenditure upon the country. With regard to that part of the Bill dealing with juvenile offenders, that seemed to him to be by far the simplest and easiest part, and he regarded it with sympathy. It was always an unwelcome and unsatisfactory task to mete out punishments to one's fellows, and there was no case in which that task was apt to be more unsatisfactory than that of juvenile offenders. He thought the Borstal system was a good one, but he wished to say a word or two upon the extraordinary powers which it was proposed to place in the hands of the Home Secretary. The Government appeared to rely upon the bureaucrat who was a prominent feature in all their new schemes, and he was generally very autocratic. But the powers to be given to the Home Secretary to exercise by his mere fiat were enormous. He might transform the Bill into one which would empower any two justices to apply the provisions of the first part of the Bill to a man forty years of age. He doubted very much whether it would be expedient to extend the age of the Borstal system much beyond twenty-one at any rate, and if such sweeping and drastic extensions of this measure were desirable, they were worthy of discussion by the House. He regarded the powers to finance a philanthropic agency with some little distrust. He was not at all sure that those agencies would be willing to submit to public control, and then, owing to this State assistance, private subscriptions would fall off, Government would be asked for larger subventions, and these institutions would tend to be more and more supported by Government. But it was under the second part of the Bill, dealing with habitual criminals, that questions of the greatest importance affecting personal liberty arose. The proposals in this respect were a little amazing, having regard to the criticisms which had annoyed him for many years which cried out against the injustice of passing what seemed a long sentence for some trifling offence and which persistently ignored the fact that the sentence was the last of a long series of convictions. It was amazing to see with what a vengeance a previous conviction was recognised in this Bill. Under this measure the mere fact of previous convictions coupled with the element of leading a life of crime was to transform a man from the position of a citizen subject to definite imprisonment and place him in a new category of prisoners who, by the sentence of the Court, were to be placed in a separate establishment. This second part was at once too drastic and not sufficiently elastic. The Court was debarred from bringing this part of the Act into operation unless, as a condition precedent, it imposed on the prisoner a term of three years penal servitude. But the armed burglar, the skilled coiner, the forger, and the prince among villains were a very small class. They did not present the real problem. It was the man who was not so much a terror as a chronic nuisance to his fellows who formed nine-tenths of the habitual criminals met with at Assizes. He was the man who had lived for many years by petty fraud and petty pilfering. That was the kind of criminal who was most likely to be beneficially dealt with under this part of the Bill, and it was for that reason that he suggested that this was a distinct blot upon the measure, and that powers should be given to the Judge to impose this new sentence of preventive detention in lieu of, as well as in addition to, a sentence of imprisonment or penal servitude. Again, what was to be the real *status* of this new class of prisoners? Where was the power of release, and how was it to be exercised? He noticed the Home Secretary said it would be within the prisoner's power to effect his own release. If that were true, he had failed to find it in the Bill. Either the man would be in prison doing compulsory work, or he would have the power, by good conduct, of obtaining from the visiting authority a certain measure of freedom, under which he would be released from prison, but kept under a system of tutelage and supervision on a licence. It was obvious that he would not be free, for the licence was to be forfeited if he escaped from the supervision of the person to whom he had been entrusted. But what his actual position would be the Bill did not say. The persons to whom he was entrusted were to be responsible for his personal custody and he must report himself to them. What reports must be made by the prisoner was completely ignored in the Bill, and there was not even the provision with which they were so familiar in the legislation of the present Government that the Home Secretary might make rules dealing with the question. He took it that it was the intention that real freedom should, at any rate, be obtainable by persons on whom the new sentence of preventive detention was passed. He did not mean a mere mitigation of sentence, or living for the rest of the criminal's days under tutelage. He meant by real freedom that a man might be his own master again just as before sentence was passed. If that was not the intention, then this Bill provided imprisonment for life, or deprivation of liberty for life. If that was the intention, he could not help thinking that it was most desirable that it should be clearly stated in the body of the Bill. How was complete liberty ever to be gained by a man on whom sentence of detention was passed?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said the intention certainly was that there should be opportunity for recovering complete liberty.

*MR. CLAVELL SALTER said he understood from the right hon. Gentleman that it was the intention that, in addition to a mitigation of imprisonment, there should be the possibility of a man's recovering his complete liberty and being his own master again. If that was the intention, he did not think the Bill said so. The sentence of preventive detention passed by the Judge was to run during His Majesty's pleasure. It might be intended that the Home Secretary should notify the intention of the Crown that the sentence should cease to operate, but if that was not the intention, there was no machinery by which liberty could ever be given to a man on whom this sentence of detention was passed. He desired to say in regard to the Second Part of the Bill that he thought well of it, subject to the modifications to which he had referred. He thought it would be greatly hampered and maimed if they insisted on making it a condition precedent that, in dealing with a man under the Bill, they must get the verdict of a jury that he was an habitual criminal. He felt confident that it would be better to leave that to the Judge and to approximate the Second Part to the First Part of the Bill. In the First Part it was left to the Judge to decide whether the convicted person was a suitable subject for Borstal treatment. The Judge would decide after careful inquiry whether the case was a proper one for a sentence of preventive detention. He knew something of juries, and he was a great admirer of them. Whatever the facts might be, juries would hesitate or refuse to find a verdict that a man was an habitual criminal, because they would anticipate and dislike the consequence of such a verdict. They would say that if they found a man to be an habitual criminal the Judge would pass this terrible sentence, and they would refuse to give that verdict in precisely those least hopeless cases in which the system could be applied with the greatest effect. He would respectfully urge the House to consider whether it would not be of great importance to apply to Parts I. and II. practically the same machinery in that connection. He could not help thinking that there would be ample safeguards against any miscarriage, or any undue harshness. The provision in regard to an alternative form of sentence was novel, and it was shocking to the conservative lawyer. He was not sure that it was undesirable, and, personally, not only did he not object to it in Part I., but he should be disposed to apply it in Part II. If a Judge passed a sentence of preventive detention, and also the alternative sentence of imprisonment, or penal servitude, under the ordinary law, let the experts, in whom he had the greatest confidence, say whether it was a case for preventive detention or for the ordinary sentence to take effect. He saw nothing derogatory to the dignity of the Judges in adopting that course. There was to be the right of appeal against the new sentence of preventive detention, and powers were to be given to the prison authorities and the Home Secretary in regard to release, subject to certain conditions. It appeared to him that with these safeguards there was no danger of undue severity. He regarded the whole Bill with great interest, and not without sympathy, but it certainly raised questions of personal liberty of the greatest moment —questions which, he was sure, hon. Members would consider with the greatest care and jealousy. He thought the Bill ought not to be read a second time until it had received careful consideration.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.) said he desired to say a few words with reference to the Bill from the standpoint of sympathy for criminals. Upon the first part of the Bill he had little to say by way of criticism. He thought the powers proposed to be conferred on the Home Office were conceived in the interest of persons convicted. He should strongly object to what his hon. friend termed bureaucratic administration of the criminal law if that was likely to tend in the direction of further strengthening the hands of justice vindictively against prisoners, but the power of the Home Secretary to transfer from prisons to Borstal institutions was obviously in the interest of prisoners. Equally obvious was it in the interest of the general body of persons in Borstal institutions that the Home Secretary should have power to remove them from these institutions and substitute detention in prisons. He was bound to confess that he did not understand subsection (3) of Clause 1. If it was intended that it should be in the power of two justices, as the result of an order from the Home Secretary, to send a person convicted of, say, a petty larceny to a Borstal institution, he did not see why Parliament should not enact that power at once. Why should not the House say that justices convicting under the Summary Jurisdiction Act of 1879, and amending Acts, should have power, if they pleased, to send any fit subjects to Borstal institutions? Why should that be an administrative act on the part of the Home Office? He wished to know also whether it was to be in the power of justices to send criminals to Borstal institutions. Their power was limited at present to giving sentence of imprisonment for six months on persons convicted, say, of petty larceny. It seemed to him rather a strong order to give two justices power to send a criminal to a Borstal institution for a period of three years. The difficulty in interpreting the section was owing to the obscure way in which it was drawn. It was in the power of the Home Secretary to transfer to a Borstal institution a person who had been convicted and sentenced by two justices. He was bound to say that he did not see much harm in that, because they must assume that the Home Secretary would do that as the result of inquiries and reports received as to the prisoner's character. He was utterly unable to reconcile himself to Part II., although he had tried very hard to do so. The purpose of Part II. of the Bill was to exclude from society vicious persons who when at liberty were constantly preying upon society. He would say from his own comparatively limited experience in the administration of the law that there was nothing more heart-breaking than to see young men who did nothing but alternate between crime and prison. If they were let out, they returned to their evil habits, and perhaps there was small blame to them, because the condition of those people was largely due to the circumstances of their birth and environment. The great difficulty which arose in the case of a man or woman who had been convicted of crime was the obtaining of honest employment. He must say that in the main it was to be attributed to the accident of birth. He must confess that it was due to mere chance that he was not standing in the dock and the prisoner sitting on the judgment seat. That was the class of people with whom this Bill was intended to deal. How was it proposed to deal with them? He would ask hon. Members who were not lawyers to follow the proposal. The proposal was that if a man was convicted of a crime punishable with penal servitude, and if he had been three times previously convicted of a crime, the Court, in addition to passing a sentence of penal servitude, might pass a further sentence of preventive detention during His Majesty's pleasure. He assumed that it was a crime punishable by penal servitude. He repeated that there were many crimes, such as petty larceny, which, owing to the barbarity of our criminal law, were punishable by penal servitude. If a person was convicted of such a crime and had been previously convicted three times of a crime punishable by penal servitude, and if he was a person who was an habitual criminal or was leading a dishonest life, then the punishment was that he was to be kept in penal servitude during His Majesty's pleasure. The only instance to his knowledge where that could be done now was in the case of a criminal lunatic. That was an appalling, a terrible punishment. He did not know whether hon. Members quite realised what an awful punishment it was to inflict upon a human being—that he should be immured for the rest of his life at the tender mercies of the prison officials.

MR. GLADSTONE said that it was not proposed by the Bill that a man should be immured to penal servitude for the term of his natural life.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said that that was a distinction in terms. The criminal was to be sent to penal servitude and then he was to be sent to a prison or part of a prison for the rest of his life, subject always to the will and pleasure of the Home Secretary. He considered that a terrible punishment, even assuming that the Act was fairly administered. He had every respect for the prison officials as a conscientious body of men, but he must confess that it was a terrible thing for a man to live at the tender mercies of the officials who acted on the report of warders and governors of gaols (even allowing for the increased powers of supervision given under the Bill), especially when the man was to remain in that part of the prison for the rest of his life. He assumed that the judicial officer was going to discharge his functions fairly and reasonably. But would he do so? A very large proportion of the administration of justice in this country was in the hands of Chairmen of Quarter Sessions. Many of these gentlemen were endowed with admirable judicial qualities, and the prisoners were as well treated before these Chairmen of Quarter Sessions as they would be before Judges of the High Court. But there were, unfortunately, very numerous cases in which Chairmen of Quarter Sessions were very unsympathetic, very bigoted, and he was sorry to say very merciless. If a man were brought before a Quarter Sessions charged with petty larceny, the Chairman of the Sessions might say, "This is a case for penal servitude for the rest of his life, or exclusion for the rest of his life. I will give this man, to whom I would otherwise give a sentence of six months imprisonment, a sentence of penal servitude." Now, the Act of Parliament would oblige that Chairman of Quarter Sessions to inflict a sentence of penal servitude—for what? Petty larceny. There were to be three previous convictions, not extending to any limited period of time, but three convictions which might have taken place over a period of twenty or thirty years.

MR. GLADSTONE called the attention of the hon. and learned Gentleman to the fact that the charge of being an habitual criminal was not to be inserted in the indictment without the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said he was quite aware of that, but that did not affect his argument in the slightest. The Public Prosecutor in giving leave for that charge to be made must act on the report of his police authorities. The police authorities would report that this individual had to their knowledge consorted with thieves or dishonest persons. Could anything be more uncertain, untrustworthy, or unreliable than allowing a law to be set in motion not by proof produced in Court in the first instance under the sanction of the Public Prosecutor, but upon reports made on a criminal about whom this second charge was to be made? His right hon. friend's interruption only strengthened his argument. What had the Judge or the Chairman of Quarter Sessions to do, knowing that a charge of being an habitual criminal was to be made against the prisoner, although not in the indictment? His bounden duty was to impose on this poor wretch, instead of what in the absence of that determination of the Public Prosecutor would be a punishment of six months imprisonment, a sentence of three years penal servitude. Was not that rather an alarming prospect? He did not rise to discuss the Bill in any spirit of captious hostility. He recognised that no greater service had been rendered to the cause of penology than had been rendered by his right hon. friend during his brief period of office. The Acts of Parliament which the right hon. Gentleman had passed had been beneficial to society and merciful to the criminal. But at the same time, he thought that this was a departure taken from the precedent set by the late Administration.

MR. GLADSTONE said that the Bill introduced by his right hon. friend opposite was founded on the recommendation of the Committee of 1894.

MR. ATHERLEY-JONES said he believed that that was the case, but whatever might be the origin of this Bill, he thought he would have the sympathy of every one who was not a lawyer when he said that it should not be open to a Chairman of Quarter Sessions to condemn a man to life-long imprisonment because over the whole period of his life he had been three times convicted previously of petty larcency, and because the police in charge of the prosecution desired him to be so condemned. Was it not one of the most startling departures in criminal procedure known to the criminal jurisprudence of this or any country? He passed from that to see what was to be done under the Bill with these unhappy men. There was a total absence in the measure of any scheme for the reclamation of the prisoners. What was to be done in that direction was to be done *propria motu* by the Home Secretary. The man was to remain in a prison or part of a prison — he assumed that he was to be allowed to remain there under conditions better than those in which he passed his ordinary sentence of penal servitude—but was not to take part, even in a minor degree, in the affairs of the world as a member of society. He was to be kept immured there, and it was made impossible for him to return to society by reason of his being there, in any better condition than would be the case if he were released after serving an ordinary period of penal servitude. If the object was to reclaim these prisoners, what the right hon. Gentleman ought to do was to devise some means similar to the methods followed in the United States, and tentatively in France, and some other countries. He was not sure whether attempts were not being made in Germany with the same object, but whether they had succeeded or not he could not say. At any rate, in three or four countries an endeavour was made to reclaim the prisoners by a system of labour colonies and a classification of the prisoners in these colonies. If his right hon. friend contemplated a return of those people to industrial life he should not close and slam the door of the prison upon them. Is was all very well for his right hon. friend to say that they were let out on licence; but these licences were dependent upon favourable reports for good conduct by the prison officials. There was no machinery in the Bill by which those people were to be turned out better citizens than when they entered within the prison walls. Why had not such provisions appeared in the Bill? He thought he knew. It was the fear which had crippled the hands of those interested in penology of interfering with free labour.

Mr. GLADSTONE dissented.

Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES said he did not suggest that that fear was in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman; but he knew that in the most notable words written on the subject by penologists the strongest objection was made to the competition of prison with free labour. It had been done in the United States. Of course there was an outcry, but it was done, and done with success, and he was at a loss to understand why we should not grapple with the problem here. Unless Parliament gave the right hon. Gentleman power to use machinery for this purpose, all these schemes for keeping people shut up and excluding them from social intercourse with the rest of the world were chimerical and could result in no good except the relief of society, not an inconsiderable thing, from a certain number of dangerous criminals, but counterbalanced by a terrible punishment, for a number of criminals who were not dangerous, intermittent criminals, who preyed on society only through the stress of their unhappy circumstances. Although the second part of the Bill had some germs of good in it, and it was desirable to free society of these moral pests, that freedom might be purchased at too high a price, and hon Members had no right to expose a fellow-creature at the caprice, or if not at the caprice, at the fallible discretion of the tribunals of the country, to the terrible punishment of being immured in a prison for the rest of his natural life.

*Mr. BELLOC (Salford, S.) said that a Bill of this sort ought to pass without a protest from a layman, indifferent entirely to lawyers' opinion and approaching the subject from the common-sense point of view—and a protest stronger than that they had just heard from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Durham. There were in the first clause of the second part of the Bill, Clause 8, two provisions which were so utterly at variance with every political or social principle that Western Europe had ever known or any Christian country had ever held, that he could promise the House that his protest would be echoed, if not in the House in the constituencies, if the Bill passed into law. The first principle was that the liberty of the man who committed the pettier crimes of violence and larceny – not the most dangerous to society but the most irritating to the wealthier classes—and not the greater crimes against society which so easily go unpunished, should be, at the discretion of the governing classes of this country, imprisoned for life. A more monstrous principle had never been put forward, certainly by the Parliaments of countries which boasted of a high civilisation and a system of law. The other was that the action of the Bill was to be retrospective. There were at the present moment men suffering imprisonment who were looking forward to the day when that would come to an end and they would again be free, and they were going to those men who had suffered three previous convictions, to tell them that the time to which they were looking for their release—when they were to make their re-entry into civilised life—was not to be the end of their detention. He could conceive nothing more inhuman. If there was one principle running through the law ever since it was made by Rome for the whole of Europe, it was that it should not be retrospective; and he had no doubt that if these clauses could be put before popular audiences on the platforms of the country there would be a storm of indignation which would wreck the measure. The number of people to whom this clause applied was a small number, and many would be content to regard, and who would like to regard them, with something more than disapproval. But the same thing would apply to torture. For his part, and he cared not how ridiculous his attitude might seem to the "scientific," he could not allow the provisions of such a document as this to pass without making against it the most emphatic protest possible. He heard one Member say that while the provisions of the Bill extended to Ireland, the hon. Gentlemen representing that country did not object. If we trusted, and rightly trusted, the administration of justice in this country, nobody could say that the Irish people trusted the administration of justice in their country, yet it was proposed to put the lives and liberty of Irishmen in jeopardy, when in a time of crisis public anger might take the form of political agitation and political crime. The Bill put immense power into the hands of the executive. There was only one thing to say to a measure of this kind when it became law—if it became law. It was that the English people, who had a certain amount of common sense, would not thank the House for this measure. They would rather ridicule it. They had, moreover, enough common sense to prevent the measure ever being applied.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside) said his hon. friend the Member for Salford had made a very interesting speech. He had laid down the interesting proposition that since criminal law began to be evolved in Rome the principle had been that it should not be made retrospective. No doubt that accurately described the position, because the laws then were barbaric in principle. The great merit of this Bill, the great thing in it, was that it made a breach in the barbaric principle in the treatment of crime. The guiding principle in the Roman criminal law was the primitive principle of retaliation. Its basis was retaliatory, and for that reason Roman criminal law was not retrospective. There was only one rational principle upon which crime could be treated. It could not rationally be treated on the basis of retaliation. There was no sense in that: it was merely savagery glorified under another name. Nor could crime be treated on the basis that punishment acted as a deterrent to others; because we were not entitled to punish any man in order to prevent others committing crime. Directly the principle was admitted that the primary motive for punishment was deterrence, there was no limit to the ill-usage that might be inflicted on an offender. The only rational principle was the principle of the protection of society, and that inevitably involved the principle that a man should only be imprisoned so long as society needed protection from him and not a moment longer. There was need for very great care, and the greatest pains must be taken before a man was pronounced to be a danger to society. But once it was decided that he was a danger to society, that he was an habitual nuisance, an habitual breaker of the law, then society was entitled to keep that man in confinement for the rest of his life. Otherwise we had no right to detain him at all. The principle of proportional revenge was so strong in humanity that a great number of people would probably be shocked by this Bill. A number of Judges probably would oppose this measure; because it was the painful fact that in every attempt to reach a rational system for the treatment of crime, the Judges had been the greatest obstructors. They had been brought up in the school of the old Roman barbaric law of retaliation. Even so amiable a man as Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, in discussing the doctrine of cumulative sentences, said that the moment a man's crime was expiated by his punishment, that man was quits with society and should be set free. That was only a re-statement of the old retaliatory tradition. Only in modern times had an inductive study of the detection of crime been made. His hon. friend the Member for Salford had suggested that the provisions of this Bill were equivalent to torture. The answer to that was that that was part of the Roman tradition. This Bill excluded the possibility of the infliction of imprisonment except and solely with the view of protecting society. Upon that principle the State was bound merely to detain him. This Bill was one which effectually precluded any return to the torture which was the practice in the palmy days of Rome to which his hon. friend had referred. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green had made a number of reasonable criticisms, to some of which effect might be given. But he could not assent to his hon friend's censure of the Bill as regarded the powers conferred on the Home Office. He had noticed in the House again and again a very strong disposition to press the Home Secretary to the exercise of powers which he did not possess. He had heard him fiercely attacked for not using his powers in certain cases, and pressed to overturn the rulings of Judges; and while he was constantly liable to these criticisms he was now being told that he was giving his Department powers of a character which it should not have. He doubted whether any practical lawyer would really dispute that those powers would be much more safely and faithfully exercised by the Home Office than they could be by the Judges. The precipitancy with which the Judges had to act was well known. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green had urged that all the considerations that should come into play in deciding whether a prisoner should be sent to Borstal or not could come before a Judge, but he did not think they could. The Judge was a person who was constantly pressed by cases; he was bound to get through his business before a certain hour; and even if he was alert and anxious—and he was afraid the Judges were not always that—he could not take those things into account sitting on the Bench, or pass sentence with the deliberation that was required. In view of the frequent appeals in that House to the Home Secretary to exercise certain powers in modification or alteration of the action of the Judges, they ought to be prepared to welcome the powers which this measure would confer on his office. Another point raised by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green was worthy of attention. He observed that under the Bill a person not fit for a Borstal institution was treated as fit for a prison. Strictly speaking, that perfectly well might be, if a prison was a place that was fit for anyone or that anyone was fit for. An unruly person was not fit for a Borstal institution, but he was fit for a prison if anyone was fit for a prison. But what his hon. friend meant was that a number of these people were men who were practically of unsound mind. He agreed with his hon. friend that there was need for a far closer inquisition into the mental state of prisoners than now took place. He did not believe that such an inquisition could be made to-day, in the present state of psychological and physiological science, with anything more than a rough approach to accuracy. Certainly the Judges were of all men the least competent to attempt such an investigation. Their position and training unfitted them for the process. But he would be very glad to see further steps taken to provide a class of institution where prisoners who were practically of unsound mind could be handled. He could not agree with his hon. friend that the powers conferred by this Bill were terrible. His hon. friend said it would enable two justices of the peace to send a boy to a Borstal institution for a term of years; but he would point out that it needed the Home Secretary's endorsement. If they said that by these institutions they would create the risk of inhumanity, he would urge them to reflect on the nature of the powers that now existed under the ordinary law. Studied closely, the blind cruelty with which our present criminal system operated day by day, without a word of protest from anyone, was one of the most heartrending spectacles in our social system. In the very nature of the system, inherited as it was from a totally unscientific and inhuman past, it inflicted cruelty blindly at every step and at every moment of the day, and there was no possibility of power being exercised under this measure with one hundredth part of the inhumanity and cruelty that actually went on every day under the present system, which so many Members considered sufficient or needing but little reform. His hon. friend suggested that on the committee who were to have supervision of the condition of the criminals under Part II. of the Bill there ought to be a Judge; but he hoped the Home Secretary would not accede to that suggestion. He did not see how they could put a Judge in; and he should say that, clearly, in the present state of penal science the business of the Judge was a different business altogether. His functions as a Judge were to hear and to weigh evidence, and to decide how a given case came under a given law, but the function of this committee was essentially different. It was a psychological function; it involved the study of character, a kind of preparation that a Judge had not got, and the effect of introducing a Judge on such a committee would be to restore them to the venerable state of things which his hon. friend the Member for Salford was so anxious to revive.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he must join issue with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down upon one or two of his statements. In the first place, he thought the hon. Gentleman was somewhat incorrect in speaking of a system of torture under the Roman law. So far as he remembered, it was even absolutely forbidden to flog a Roman citizen, and although there might have been some means of corporal punishment, as indeed there was for slaves, he remembered no system of torture, nor anything connected with torture, for any citizen under the Roman law. The hon. Member seemed to have rather strong views with regard to the conduct of some of His Majesty's Judges, but speaking as a member of the Bar with some experience, he had never in recent years either seen or heard of any sentence passed by any Judge which could in any way be considered as vindictive or unwarranted by the facts of the case. It was not the province of a criminal Judge to do more than listen to the evidence, sum up to the jury, and then apportion the sentence as he thought best. As regarded the Borstal system, no one suggested that anything that could be done to prevent young persons from becoming gaol birds was anything but a most desirable action on the part of Parliament. But under Clause 4 it seemed to him that the power to release on licence was somewhat unnecessary, having regard to the fact that these persons who had to deal with crime, whether they were chairmen of Quarter Sessions, or whether they were Judges or Recorders, were at any rate sitting in the place itself, and had before them all the local information with regard to the prisoner, and they passed sentence, it might be, from information which they had that it was desirable that that person should be detained in prison for a certain period of time. He did not see that any useful end would be served by the Prison Commissioners stepping in after six months and saying that there was a probability that that person would do better outside. The person probably might have had a sentence of twelve months. The local knowledge showing how he had behaved and his local surroundings had enabled the Judge who tried him to arrive at that as a fit and proper sentence. He went to gaol and behaved well, and got the usual reduction of one-fourth of his sentence. If he behaved well in gaol, and the Prison Commissioners were guided by that, they might release him in six months, and when he got out he would revert to his criminal courses, which, if he had stayed in prison for a little longer, might have been avoided. Though the Borstal system was excellent for young criminals, it was as yet only on its trial, and he did not know that it was wise to extend it until they had really ascertained whether it would be beneficial in its present operation or not. He then came to the habitual criminals. Some strong remarks had been made about that part of the Bill by the hon. Member for Salford and others, and he must say that to a great extent he agreed with them. It was said that this was a Bill of a reforming character, as indeed all sentences were intended to be, but the reforming influence to a large extent would be the certainty that if a man behaved well he would in a certain time be released; but under this system they had the power, under Clause 8, to keep a person in prison for any length of time, which sentence was not to begin until he had served a term of penal servitude, and therefore he was absolutely hopeless; he had not the hope of being released, and he would become almost deadened to any sense at all, and he did not think that that could have any possible benefit for any prisoner. They knew that for the protection of society it was useful, but they must not protect society by shutting people up for the term of their natural life; that was really bringing in a system of cruelty. The police were perfectly capable of looking after these persons when they came out, and if they offended again their sentences were increased. There was many a man who had been in gaol over and over again and was looked upon as an habitual criminal, but there was hope for him, as for everybody in the world, and it was possible that he would reform; but the possibility that he would be shut up for any length of time would not help to reform a prisoner but would lead him to a sense of hopelessness and even of despair. He did not approve either of the provision under which another indictment stating that a man was an habitual criminal should be brought before the Court, because that matter would largely rest with the police, and although he had nothing to say against the police as a general rule, one knew very well that when it was thought desirable to get a conviction it was quite possible for a man to be put down as an habitual criminal under circumstances which would not strictly entitle that to be done. They had now got the charge of previous convictions, which was always put on another indictment, and was not brought before the Court until after a man had been convicted, and he believed they met by that exactly the same circumstances as they would meet by stating in another indictment that the person was an habitual criminal.

*MR. MACLEAN (Bath) said that one would gather that the main object of the Bill was the additional punishment of criminals, but the title of the Bill was the Prevention of Crime, and he would add the Reform of Criminals. The main objections seemed to have been to Part II. of the Bill, which enabled the Court, for the benefit of society, to send a man to prison for such a time as might be reasonably required for his reformation. He admitted that that was a very grave and quite unusual alteration in the system of criminal law, but what, shortly, were the steps to be taken before that could come into operation? First of all, they had to get the permission of the Director of Public Prosecutions before they could place a charge of being an habitual criminal in the indictment, and they could not get that consent without the most careful consideration on the part of the Director; it was not a thing granted off-hand at all, and he spoke from personal experience of the matter. Then again, seven days notice had to be given as to the charge which was to be made; after trial the prisoner had to be sentenced to a term of penal servitude, and then the jury had to be specifically charged and the facts presented to them as to whether the man was or was not an habitual criminal, regard being had for the fact that he had been three times convicted and was at the time leading a persistently dishonest life. It had been said by some of the speakers that they would rather be tried by a Judge than by a jury, but he would very much rather be tried by a jury than by a Judge. Under Clause 9 the prisoner had the right of appeal without any cost to himself, and no doubt other methods of protection would be suggested in Committee, but he did not think any man could have devised any more reasonable precautions than were already inserted in the Bill, if they admitted the principle that the violent habitual criminal was a man against whom society must be protected. The Bill was full of safeguards, which, to his mind, quite adequately protected a man. He was specially interested in Part I. of the Bill, which seemed to him to be an absolutely necessary corollary or sequence to the Children Bill, which stopped short at the age of sixteen, and this Bill now carried on their efforts to reform the young law-breaker—he would not call him the young criminal—between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. The Borstal system was still in the experimental stage, but the results, whilst not giving rise to any complete confidence, showed most reasonable grounds for believing that the experience gained could be thoroughly well relied upon for a further test as suggested in the Bill. A good deal of criticism had been directed against Subsection (3) of Clause 1, giving power to the Court, in the cases of persons summarily convicted of an indictable offence, practically to do away with an age limit and give the prisoner the benefit of the Borstal system. He had in his hand a Return which he had got out of the records of nine prisoners, and not one of them had more than six months sentences passed upon him or her. Here was the record of one, a woman. She had been convicted no less than twelve times of felony between June, 1904, and October, 1907, and only once was she sentenced to six months' imprisonment. It was hopeless to deal with a woman of that sort, but it was quite possible under this Bill for the Court to say, "Here is a case where such a woman is open to the remedial treatment under the Borstal system: she is a perfect pest to society." He desired to express most emphatically his approval of the provision of the Bill. It really moved towards, not only the punitive methods of the criminal, but the reformation of them and the protection of society from them. He found in that Bill the fruition of many years of patient work by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary, whom he heartily congratulated that he had found the opportunity for carrying out a very large portion of his life work. The whole idea of the treatment of criminals in this country should run on somewhat similar lines to our treatment of physical disease. Let them punish those men by all means, and let them feel the weight of society's judgment upon their conduct, but at the same time they must reform them, and if they were incurable and found to be so after a scientific inquiry, then, very reluctantly, but for the sake of the protection of society and for themselves, they should be prevented from further carrying on their depredations.

*MR. STARKEY (Nottinghamshire, Newark) said he had hesitated to intervene in this debate, but having had some experience as a magistrate and as one of the visiting justices of the local prison he had acquired some little knowledge of the subject. He must say that he supported this Bill because he thought that it moved in the right direction. It filled up the gap which existed in dealing with the criminal population. As a magistrate he recognised that the First Offenders Act was one of the most useful enactments that they could have had put before them. But this Bill seemed to go beyond that measure; it seemed to carry the Act to which he referred a stage further. Of course the principle of the First Offenders Act was to keep a convicted young person out of prison, and to prevent his being contaminated by the prison atmosphere. But this Bill recognised that there were people who could not be dealt with under that Act, but who yet might be preserved from becoming habitual criminals if they were properly dealt with. The Borstal system was in no sense a vindictive system. It aimed at reforming a young person who had unfortunately broken the law. The Bill had this advantage that it operated later in a person's life than was the case under the other Act. The ages under this Bill were from 16 to 21, and, therefore, they had an opportunity of reforming a person which they had not before. The Bill, in the first place, operated humanely in every sense; it tried to prevent criminals from being created; but in the second portion of the Bill all the sternness of the law was apparent. If it was seen that the opportunities which were afforded failed in their object, then it was necessary that the criminal should be treated on the same lines as a criminal lunatic was treated, and he was to be confined during His Majesty's pleasure. The theory was, he presumed, that if the criminal was let loose he was really not fit to exercise that self-restraint which normal minds and temperaments possessed, and that therefore he should be prevented from committing further crime. Unfortunately, it was no doubt true that this was the only way to prevent such criminals from preying on society. There were one or two points which he should like to criticise in connection with the Bill, and he did not do so in any hostile spirit. The alternative sentences were dealt with by Clause 1, and it seemed to him that there was uncertainty as to what the ultimate sentence would be. Under ordinary circumstances, where a man was sentenced to a fine or imprisonment, the Court and the prisoner knew what was the alternative and there was a scale laid down. Now there was no scale, so far as he could see, with regard to these alternative sentences. A man would primarily be sentenced to detention under the Borstal system, if that were decided as the best way of dealing with him, and then, as an alternative to that, they had to provide a legal sentence of either imprisonment or penal servitude. The Secretary of State had to deal with the matter, and he was able to convert the period of detention into an equal period of imprisonment, with or without hard labour. That seemed to him to be giving the Secretary of State a most extraordinary power. By Clause 5 of the Bill the Secretary of State could send an incorrigible person away from a Borstal institution, and make him serve the remainder of his unexpired sentence either with or without hard labour. Supposing that a person had served only one month of his sentence of three years in the Borstal institution and was then found to be incorrigible, it would be possible for the Secretary of State to send him to prison for two years and eleven months with hard labour. That would be, of course, a most terrible punishment and he believed beyond what the present law allowed. He thought that this was altogether too severe a clause to be allowed to pass, and he hoped it would be amended. Then there was another point in connection with the measure. He did not quite gather whether a criminal had to be convicted three times or four times before he was considered an habitual criminal.

Was the charge of his being an habitual criminal made on the third occasion on which he was tried, or on the fourth? ["Fourth."] He gathered that it was on the fourth, and of course that cleared up that particular point. Then there was another point. Quarter Sessions had not that experience that Judges of the land had. Many of the junior members who sat as magistrates had very little experience, especially of the criminal law in its more serious aspects, and yet they might be called upon at Quarter Sessions to say whether or not a man was to be deprived of his liberty for the remainder of his life. He thought that such a power ought not to exist in that form. It seemed to him to be altogether too serious to allow people who had no large amount of experience to deal with questions which involved the liberty of a man for the whole of his life. Then with regard to the person or society who was to take charge of these criminals when they were out, he hoped that some provision was made for the exercise of real control by those to whom these criminals were entrusted. It was necessary that there should be real security. It certainly would not be a pleasant thing for the people of the neighbourhood to which these habitual criminals were taken. He had no doubt that the Home Secretary would take all reasonable precautions, but still these habitual criminals would be in the neighbourhood, and it would certainly make those living there feel uncomfortable, unless every security were provided to ensure that these habitual criminals were in secure control and charge. Hoping that some of the drastic powers which were given to the Home Secretary would be amended in Committee, he had great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

*MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln) said he had one or two words to add to what had been already said. There did not appear to be any real criticism on the first part of the Bill, with the exception of that made by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green in reference to alternative sentences. But it seemed to him that the alternative sentences, whoever suggested them, were admirable. In the first place the Court who sentenced the prisoner did not invariably grasp the nature of the new reforming process which was introduced. He had recently paid a visit to the Borstal institution in Lincoln, and an extreme case had come under his notice. A boy aged fourteen had been sentenced by the Court to seven days treatment under the Borstal system for the offence of sleeping out. The lad was apparently troublesome to deal with, and it was clear that if this Bill passed into law, such a sentence could not be imposed. But that was merely a glaring case which showed that the Court which passed the sentence might totally misunderstand what the Borstal system really was. Therefore, if this system was to prove a success it must surely be tried in cases where a real chance of improvement existed. They knew the class of cases they wanted. They wanted to deal with boys or young men, who had never had a chance in life, who had no calling, and who could be put into a position which would be likely to give them a real chance in life. These young lads and young men could get a real chance under the Borstal system; they would have an opportunity of learning a trade. But the Court might select the wrong cases, and he thought it was quite desirable that there should be the power of throwing back an offender who was not suitable on to the alternative sentence. It would, too, he thought have a very desirable effect upon the offender himself. He would know what he had escaped, and he would appreciate the privilege which he obtained under the system. He would know that unless he behaved himself, if he proved incorrigible and did not respond to the treatment, he would be thrown back upon the alternative sentence. On both these grounds he thought the alternative sentence was a useful device, and one which would work well. Some criticism had been offered on subsection (3) with regard to the possibility of extending the system by order of the Home Secretary. Surely that was desirable. The system was on its trial. It was very desirable to try it between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, but why should it be brought to a full stop at the age of twenty-one. Why should it not be extended to twenty-two or twenty-three? If they were to wait until Parliament legislated and extended a system which in practice might be found to be desirable, they might have to wait a very long time. Surely it was not unreasonable to grant the Home Secretary, of course under the control of the House, the power of developing a system which seemed very promising at the present moment and which might prove applicable above the age to which it was restricted under the Bill. In dealing with Part II. of the Bill, which had reference to the treatment of habitual criminals, he laboured under the disqualification of not being a lawyer; and perhaps on this account he had not so much fear as the hon. Member for Salford as to any interference with personal liberty. He was bound to say that the hon. Member's discovery in Part II. of a conspiracy amongst the governing classes against the liberty of the individual seemed to him a detection of the strangest and most grotesque mare's nest. He imagined that there was no one who had taken part in or had witnessed the sentencing of prisoners who did not feel the stupidity of much of it. They were, as it were, launching bolts in the dark and had little idea what effect such sentences had on the criminal. Surely, the most stupid part of the present system was the infliction of recurrent short sentences on some habitual criminals. They got cases of men with twenty or thirty sentences behind them. The continuance of this process was no good to the individual, and it left a nuisance to society. If they could get that class of cases and separate them from the others, the new machinery set up by the Bill would effect a desirable reform. It seemed to him that there was an adequate network of safeguards and securities against any real danger to personal liberty. It would be a sacrifice of common sense to refuse the extension of this power. He fully believed there would be a chance of the reformation of offenders who were sentenced to detention, whilst society would be relieved of a real pest by the adoption of the policy of the indeterminate sentence. He regarded the Bill as an instance of the more humane treatment of the problems of crime which had recently marked the administration of the Home Office.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.) said he would not have taken part in the discussion if it had not been for the challenge thrown out to Irish Members by the hon. Member for Salford, who expressed surprise that the Irish benches had not been full to protest against the introduction of the Bill, because of the possibility at some future time that it might be operated with a view of dealing with political offences. They had been closing prison after prison in Ireland, until at the present time not a third of the prisons were in use, because of the freedom of the country from ordinary crime. The Bill, therefore, so far as the ordinary criminal was concerned, would have very little to do with Ireland. There were two other classes of crime in Ireland. There was what might be called the *quasi*-political crime, or that which was connected with the sale of land movement. That was dealt with under a special Act of Parliament, or it had been dealt with in the past under various Acts of Parliament; so that so far as they were concerned, they had nothing to do with the Bill at all. There was a third class of offence from which Ireland was free at the present time, but of which there might under conceivable circumstances be a recrudescence, and that was a special class of crime of a treasonable nature. The crime of high treason had been practically abolished. Many years ago—he thought it was in 1870—the present Lord James of Hereford introduced what was now known as the Treason Felony Act, and cases of treason since that day had been tried, not as cases of high treason, but as cases of treason felony. Under that Act long sentences might be inflicted. He had known sentences ranging from fourteen to twenty years to be inflicted under it. This Bill, however, could not operate at all in the case of an offender against the treason felony laws, because it was a reforming measure, and the man to be treated under it was a man who would be expected to express regret for the offence he had committed, and to promise amendment for the future. How could they reform a felon who was proud of his act? He was present when Mr. James F. O'Brien, who sat in that House for over twenty years, was sentenced at Cork to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. He knew him to lie many weary days under that sentence until at last it was commuted to penal servitude. What would be the use of expecting him to express regret for an offence in which he gloried and which, under similar circumstances, he would commit again? The Bill could have nothing whatever to do with that class of offence. He trusted he had fully answered the hon. Member for Salford. With regard to the Bill, he had only to say that he thought Clause 5 might possibly operate with harshness, if not in the hands of the present Home Secretary, then in the hands of some future Home Secretaries. He had had some practical experience of the right hon. Gentleman's administration of his very important Department, and he knew with what humanity he discharged his duties. He had many years ago read carefully the Report of his Committee, and had had since that time many occasions to observe how he conducted his Department, and he was happy to state publicly in Parliament that no Department of the State could be conducted with such humanity and mercy and qualities of that description as had been brought to bear by the right hon. Gentleman himself. But he submitted that Clause 5 might possibly be administered with harshness in the future. That was the transference of the incorrigible from the better class to the worse. That clause elevated the right hon. Gentleman's office to a judicial office, without any help, without any restraint whatever, without even the restraint of publicity which they always had with regard to Judges and juries. That was the only blot he could see on the Bill, which was well conceived, and would operate with great advantage to the State in the future, and he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman upon it.

Mr. GLADSTONE said he was glad to take note of the fact that though many speeches had been delivered very few—perhaps not more than two—had traversed or attempted to traverse any root principle of the Bill. Many interesting points had been touched upon which would be the subject-matter of discussion in Committee. On some of these he would have something to say. He agreed that a Bill of this kind, novel in some of its features, seemingly drastic to some hon. Members who had not deeply studied the question, must be closely considered, and it must secure the general confidence of Parliament and the country if it was to become law. He had noticed that various hon. and learned Gentlemen had taken part in the debate and appeared to think this Bill was essentially one for discussion by lawyers, and that they ought to have a predominant voice. He frankly and cheerfully welcomed the assistance of lawyers, but the two parts of the Bill involved questions much more of policy than of law, and every layman was entitled to have a full voice and he would speak with at least as much authority on this question as any lawyer in the House. As regarded the first part of the Bill no justification was really needed for it. He thought it right, however, to let the House see at the present moment what the real need for this part was, that they might know what had been done quietly and unostentatiously. The majority of criminals were made somewhere between the ages of eleven and twenty-one. There was a census of prisoners some years ago, and out of 2,879 male convicts undergoing penal servitude in 1901, no less than 1,181 in this given year had been sentenced to penal servitude three or four times. What did they find in regard to their age on first conviction? Forty-two of them were first convicted under the age of ten, and no fewer than 662 were convicted between the ages of eleven and twenty-one, so that of the total number they had no less than 704 convicts out of 1,181 who fell first into crime before they were twenty-one. If the figures were examined with regard to the worst criminals in local prisons or those under sentence of penal servitude in convict prisons in any year, these figures would be reproduced. Let him read to the House the first paragraph of this year's Report of the Borstal Association—

> "Until a few years ago the young prisoner was treated in no way differently from the old hardened offender. Except for the brief space given to service in the chapel and exercise of a monotonous kind he passed the whole day and night locked up in a cell by himself with no one to speak to, with a window which he could not look out of, and without enough work to occupy him half his time."

That was the condition of things a comparatively short time ago. He wished time permitted him to speak in detail of the splendid work done by the Borstal Association. They received no help from Parliament. It was all very well for Members of Parliament to come down on some special day and take the Prison Commissioners, the Home Secretary, and the prison authorities generally, under their benignant, beneficent care. He took note of the fact that hon. Members came down and made eloquent speeches on these special occasions, and then went away and seemed to pay no more attention perhaps for years. Meanwhile the work was being carried on under the auspices of the Home Office by the prison authorities, those men whose stoniness of heart was only equalled by the incapacity of their intellect, yet somehow or other in spite of that they had gone on initiating admirable work without any motive power from the House of Commons. He respectfully put it to the House that it was not quite fair of the House of Commons to take a very superior attitude and say: "We can never trust these gentlemen with any special powers or privileges or authority in looking after and taking charge of criminals." At present this Borstal Association worked without the aid of the law. He did not mean to say it was lawless, but it did special work which was not provided for by the law as it stood. It depended on voluntary contributions—he believed three or four Members of the House of Commons, which was so much interested in prison questions, subscribed to its funds. It was dependent from the first upon the initiative and work of whom? Sir Evelyn Ruggles-Brise. First of all it had provided full Borstal treatment at Borstal and Lincoln, and there educational processes were applied to the prisoners. They were taught trades, put through physical drill; their minds and bodies were seen to, and the best was made of them. After discharge the Borstal Committee paid special attention to these people, and that was the most important part of their work. If they trained a boy before discharge, and let him go away and lost sight of him he might relapse, and this class perhaps generally would relapse. The most important and most expensive and burdensome part of the work of the Committee was looking after these lads after their discharge. Last year the cases actually dealt with after discharge were 189, of which 66 per cent. were reported to be doing well. These lads were tough customers. They were not easily reformed. Of these 189 the average number of convictions for each was no less than four, so the House could see that this material was difficult to deal with, and the record of 66 per cent. of success was extremely satisfactory. That was part of the Borstal system. There was another part. His right hon. friend and predecessor thought the Borstal system was applied at only two prisons. As a matter of fact what was called the modified Borstal system was now in work at no less than twelve centres, and in these centres cases were treated where the sentence was twelve months or less. In 1907–8, the number treated was 8,964, of whom 50 per cent. had committed serious offences, and 43 per cent. had been previously convicted. Of those who were discharged during the year, 29 per cent. were doing well, 10 per cent. were doing indifferently, 13 per cent. had been re-convicted and the remainder had been handed over to their friends and no report had been received about them. Presumably, a large proportion of that number were doing all right in the care of their friends. This was a very great work, quiet and unostentatious, and he was anxious that the House should know whom they had to thank for this. He had listened to hon. Members saying it would never do to trust the lives and liberties of these unhappy men to permanent officials, prison governors, or prison commissioners. It was his present task to draw the attention of the House to the work these very men were doing, and had been doing, in order that they might have fuller confidence in even increasing their responsibilities. This was a great work, but there were great defects. In the first place there was no sufficiency of money. In the second place there was no sufficient accommodation for full Borstal treatment. In the third place, and this was the most important point, there was no power to release on conditional licence. That, he thought, was the essence of the first part of the Bill as it was of the second. Fourthly, there was no power in the Courts to send to the Borstal prison except through the Secretary of State. All these points ought to be made good. He would just deal with some criticisms which had been made on the first part of the Bill. Strong exception had been taken to the first clause, which provided for an alternative sentence. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green seemed to see in it something sinister, something unconstitutional and dangerous. He understood him to say that he had no objection to Clause 5, but he did object to the power given to the Home Secretary under Clause 1. He was much more afraid of the view the House would take of Clause 5 than of Clause 1. Clause 1 was of the most innocent character. He had introduced the first part of the Bill last year, and proposed in the first clause of that Bill that when the Court sentenced an offender to Borstal treatment, and it was found that he was an unsuitable subject for Borstal treatment the Secretary of State after consultation with the Judge who had passed the sentence might commute it to such sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment as might be determined by the Court, so that the term of the sentence should not exceed the sentence of detention. Some power of the kind was necessary. It would be quite impossible for the Court to diagnose and acquaint itself with the character of the offender they were dealing with, unless there was considerable delay in pronouncing sentence. They found this difficulty in the cases which were treated under the present Borstal arrangement. After the passing of this Bill they would have many more cases, and if there was not some such provision the trouble would be accentuated. He agreed in terms it was open to argument, and he was quite ready in Committee to see if any better or safer proposal could be found to meet the objections which had been raised. All they wanted was to have some machinery by which, if after a Borstal sentence the subject was found unsuitable for Borstal treatment, they would be able to transfer him to an equivalent detention in prison. He had taken high counsel before drafting the clause, and he told the House frankly that that was the whole object. It was not to give the Secretary of State power to interfere, or to arm him with fresh powers, but simply to make the Borstal sentence work more smoothly. He was quite prepared if the House thought it better to adopt the plan of last year. When they found a case unsuitable now, he communicated with the Judge who passed the sentence, and asked him what sentence he would have passed if he had not recommended the prisoner for Borstal treatment. He considered the case, and mentioned a certain term, and it was always accepted. But it was inconvenient to seek the Judge and force him to throw his memory back to the case and bring out his notes, and so forth, and after consultation they thought it simplest and best to have this plan of alternative sentences, so that the whole business should work smoothly. That was the whole explanation of this daring and dangerous innovation in the British constitution. The late Home Secretary had asked him a question with regard to subsection (3), and other hon. Members had also dealt with the dangers of this clause. Here, again, there was no intention to do anything contrary to the wishes of Parliament. The House must remember that this was a new departure. They did not want to bring upon themselves a whole flood of cases for which they were not properly prepared. They would take measures as soon as the Bill was passed to get as much accommodation as they could, and they knew that if they opened the floodgates, if they fixed the age straight away at twenty-three, or enabled Courts of Summary Jurisdiction to send offenders to Borstal, they would not really have the equipment with which to deal with these people. Of course, they hoped to have it in time. Therefore, it was in their minds to postpone the full operation by the method proposed in subsection (3). There he came to criticism on Clause 5 which he confessed was harder to meet. He thought it would be agreed that some power of this kind was obviously necessary. How was this to be done? If a boy in a Borstal institution was a wilful centre of bad influence he ought to be treated more severely, and the only question was how that was to be done. He admitted that he was rather afraid of the clause. No Home Secretary wished to arm himself or his successors with unnecessarily drastic powers, but words might be put in to the effect that the Home Secretary might act in conjunction with the Judge who sentenced the boy originally. He passed on to the second part of the Bill, with which he must deal in some detail. He thought his hon. friend the Member for Bethnal Green was under a misapprehension, and he was afraid that the hon. Member did not catch what he said in his speech upon the introduction of this Bill. In introducing the Bill he endeavoured to draw a distinction between the persistent dangerous criminal and those guilty of minor misdemeanoure which, however, might involve severe punishment. These mostly constituted the much larger class of those who were partly vagrants, partly criminals, and who were to a large extent mentally deficient. That was a great problem that ought to be dealt with, and soon; but they could not deal with it under the method proposed by the Bill. The hon. Member for Tyneside had spoken of the necessity of paying more attention to the prisoners of unsound mind. He agreed that that was a matter requiring the closest attention; but on this occasion they were trying to deal with the advanced dangerous criminal, and they would have to await the Report of the Commission on the Feeble-Minded before they turned their thoughts to this branch of the subject. The hon. Member for Salford had condemned Part II. on some principle of Roman law. But what did the hon. Member propose instead? Was he satisfied with the present system and its results? If the hon. Member was he was not. The hon. Member had used strong language in condemning the Bill; but it was nothing like the strength of the language that he himself could use in condemning the present system. In 1900 the total male convict population was 2,624, and of these 1,476 had been convicted five times or more. On 31st March, 1908, the total was 2,897, of whom 2,376, or over 82 per cent., had been previously convicted, while 1,073 had actually undergone previous sentences of penal servitude. Statistics showed that with every conviction the probability of return to prison increased. He would quote the figures compiled for the Committee in 1894. Of the men in prison for the first time 30 per cent. returned again, of those who came in for the second time 48 per cent. returned, after the third time 64 per cent. returned, after the fourth 71 per cent., and after the fifth 79 per cent., and so on, until it reached a point where it became practically certain unless death intervened the man would come back to prison. Accompanying this there had been increasing reluctance on the part of Judges to give long sentences of penal servitude. That, he had no doubt, arose from very praiseworthy motives under the well-founded belief that greater leniency of treatment was for the good of the average prisoner. But in the shortening of sentences the most desperate criminals of all got the full benefit of what was designed for the average man. He would give one or two illustrations of this. A man of sixty-seven who had received seven sentences of penal servitude and ten convictions for various forms of robbery was sentenced, immediately after serving seven years for burglary, to twelve months only for the same offence. That was followed by three sentences of five years in succession. Another man, who was given six months for robbery with violence, had sustained ten previous convictions—five for very serious offences—had been sent to penal servitude three times for stealing and coining. Yet for robbery with violence he received only six months. In a third case a man who had served thirty-seven years for housebreaking and stealing received only one month on a new charge of stealing. No wonder the criminal classes laughed at the present system, which had very little effect upon those against whom the Bill was directed. In the current year so far 1,138 male convicts had been received into penal servitude. Of these 419, or 36 per cent., had previously undergone penal servitude; 110, or 9·7 per cent., of these men received sentences of seven years and over, and 607, or more than half, received the shortest possible sentence of three years penal servitude. In that total there were a large number of hardened, determined, persistent criminals, who rejoiced at only getting three years, because in two years and eight months they would be on the job again with health recruited and able to enjoy themselves again. Some actually told the prison authorities that they were going to work in the old way as soon as they were released. For 60 per cent. the present system was sufficiently deterrent, but for the professional class it was inadequate. There was a distinction well known to criminologists between habituals and professionals. Habituals were men who dropped into crime from their surroundings or physical disability, or mental deficiency, rather than from any active intention to plunder their fellow-creatures or from being criminals for the sake of crime. The professionals were the men with an object, sound in mind—so far as a criminal could be sound in mind—and in body, competent, often highly skilled, and who deliberately, with their eyes open, preferred a life of crime and knew all the tricks and turns and manœuvres necessary for that life. It was with that class that the Bill would deal. Unfortunately recidivism was on the increase. The proportion of convicts in 1908 who had been previously convicted was 82 per cent. against 73·9 in 1903. The number previously sentenced to penal servitude in 1908 was 37 per cent. against 33·6 in 1903. How were they to deal with these persons? Different methods were proposed. First of all there was that of encouraging Judges to pass long sentences up to the maximum provided by law for particular crimes, by enabling them to direct that a particular portion of that long sentence should be served in some place other than a convict prison, and under less rigorous treatment. That was the principle of the Bill of 1904, but the whole responsibility rested upon the Judges, and the sentence would be automatically limited by law. He agreed with a great deal in that Bill, but it had certain defects. No man was qualified to come under the Bill unless he had been sentenced to seven years or more, and, therefore, a great many of the most hardened criminals would not be touched by it. That Bill was rather incomplete, as, in addition, there were no powers of discharge. There would not be uniformity in the action of the Judges. Prisoners were to go to a penal colony under a great variety of sentences. But they must have an equal basis to work upon. They must have the men there on equal conditions, so that the treatment could be organised rationally, systematically, and scientifically on a common basis, and then the men who were the most honest and sincere would be separated from the most hardened criminals. The method proposed in this Bill, so far as he could see, was the only alternative. The plan of the Bill did not involve a new principle, so far as the indeterminate sentence was concerned. Under the Common Law there was no limit to the term of imprisonment for misdemeanour. When a fine was imposed by Quarter Sessions or at Assizes in default of payment a person might be imprisoned during the pleasure of the Crown. At the present moment the indeterminate sentence was in fact known to the law in the life sentence, which was only terminated by death. The two cases were analogous, but there was a closer parallel in the case of criminal lunatics. Under the Act of 1883 a man went to Broadmoor who was found by the jury to be guilty but insane. He might in the next week become perfectly sane for all intents and purposes, though only having a short time before committed a barbarous murder. But he had been found guilty but insane, and could be detained there for life. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why?] For a very good reason. Not so very long ago the case occurred of a man who had been sent to Broadmoor for a murderous assault upon his wife. He was discharged with some hesitation by the authorities. He went out and murdered his wife. The Home Secretary or the head of Broadmoor Asylum was not going to hasten release when he knew that a responsibility of such a very serious kind might be fixed upon him. As a matter of fact there were people detained in Broadmoor who might sometimes become sane, but they could not feel sure that they would not commit homicidal offences immediately they got outside. It was a very great responsibility to decide in such cases, and they had to do the best they could in the interests of the public. He agreed that the Bill involved a new departure, but he maintained that it involved no more difficult decisions on the powers that be than they had to take every day on criminals. The Bill did involve a new departure in that it made long-continued persistency in crime punishable by indeterminate seclusion. That was a new offence and a new form of punishment. Some criticisms had been made, though they were not altogether what he had expected. How were they to secure the safeguards which would qualify a man for release from an indeterminate sentence? The responsibility, of course, would fall on the Secretary of State, but the main work would fall on the prison authorities. It was quite right that the prison authorities should be supervised, and the Government was perfectly willing to consider any fair or reasonable suggestions which might be made in Committee to secure the rights of the House of Commons and the interests of the public in seeing that no injustice to the life and liberty of any man was perpetrated. One of the suggestions of his hon. friend the Member for Bethnal Green was that a Judge and county councillors should serve on the Special Committee. He did not mind who served on it, provided the Committee was efficient. Having for many years directed attention to this matter it was very rarely that he could find anyone who had given any attention at all to it, and there were very few who really understood the hidden difficulties which baffled even the greatest experts in criminology. Hon. Members must realise that for the effective working of this Bill as well as of the Borstal system or any part of our prison system they had got to depend upon the prison authorities. Having taken precautions to see that these men were qualified and did their duty, they must recognise that these were the men who saw the prisoners day after day, and must be the best judges of the particular characteristics of each. How could a committee form a judgment like the prison governor, the medical officer, or the chaplain? The more they sought to improve the prisons the more they would have to rely upon the men who were in actual daily contact with the prisoners. Hon. Members should realise that they must rely in the main upon the men whose responsibility it was to see the work carried on. And why not rely upon the prison authorities? The last ten years had been ten years of progress and prison reform, and where did it come from? Who initiated it? Was it through the newspapers taking the question up? The matter was taken up by the *Daily Chronicle* in 1892, but that was an isolated case, conducted very ably by one or two individuals connected with that paper. Students of criminology had written interesting works, political administrators had initiated useful changes, but the main work had fallen on the Prison Commissioners. Prison treatment had undergone radical change. Prison punishments were mitigated; the unprofitable crank and the treadmill were abolished; there were improvements in sanitation, ventilation, and medical attendance, better regulations as regarded diet, visits, reading, talking; it was provided that by good conduct privileges, gratuities and remission of part of the sentence could be earned; prisoners' aid societies were encouraged and practically helped; boards of visitors of both sexes were organised; the prison staff was greatly improved, better paid, and better organised; and finally the Borstal system was initiated. All these things were carried out by the Prison Commissioners, who at present stood more in relation to the prisoners as physicians than gaolers. Much had been done on the sole initiative of Sir E. Ruggles-Brise. To the Borstal prisoners hd stood *in loco parentis*. There remained a great deal more to do, and they wanted to clear the ground. They were handicapped by want of money and antiquated prisons all over the country in the most unsuitable places where it was almost impossible to effect any good. Having regard, therefore, to the spontaneous and admirable character of the Prison Commissioners' work they were entitled to the support and confidence of that House. That he asked for, and if the House declined to give its confidence to those who were responsible they might drop this Bill at once and not dabble in what would be a useless experiment. The Special Committee would rely largely on the prison authorities when they came to any decision in recommending prisoners for licence. But they would exercise supervision. They would naturally call to counsel the men who had the daily observation of the prisoners, and he had no doubt whatever that the prison authorities, in conjunction with the Special Committee, would be perfectly competent to make reasonable and common-sense recommendations to the Secretary of State State. They were quite ready to receive any practical suggestions that might be made. He thought the plan of the Government was quite sufficient, but if hon. Members thought they could suggest anything better he would be glad to hear it. He had listened with amazement to the hon. and learned Member for North-West Durham, who condemned the second part of the Bill. He complained there was no provision in the Bill for reclamation. How could they reclaim a man by Act of Parliament? They could not make him a Christian by Act of Parliament. They could not make him sober by Act of Parliament. He could not draft clauses for reclaiming a prisoner from moral turpitude. They did not attempt to deal even in Part I with the reclamation of young offenders, but they did provide in both parts of the Bill the machinery under which reclamation might be pursued. That was the object of this Bill and of his Department, and they would provide the whole of the machinery which was necessary for bringing every kind of good influence to bear on the prisoners, to teach them trades, and to try and get them to make a fresh start in life. The hon. Gentleman seemed to think that they dared not introduce a provision for training men to some trade, because they were afraid of a labour explosion. Not the least bit. He examined representatives of trade unions on this subject fifteen years ago, and very good, sensible evidence they gave. They said that the amount of prison-made goods turned out was so small, and the desirability of getting hold of these fellows was so great, that common sense dictated that they should be set to work. Now, what was the process? A man when he got into detention would have to serve some period. Probably it would be something like three years. They would observe him very closely, and note his capacities. He would be helped and encouraged, he would be graded, given power to rise to special privileges, and to increase his *status* to the maximum possible in prison. Then he would come up for consideration as to whether he was fit for conditional licence. The probabilities of his leading an honest life on discharge would be taken into view in relation to his behaviour, his industry, his own professions, the possibility of finding occupation outside on discharge, the offers of help from friends and relatives. An hon. Member had asked what guarantee they had that a man on discharge would be able to make a fresh start. It was their intention that a man on discharge should have every opportunity of starting again, if he would only take advantage of it. He would be observed—not by the police, but under probationary supervision—and reports would be made. They would not look at him through the microscope, but they would take a broad reasonable view whether the man might be trusted to settle down. Then he could be entirely purged of his offence, and although there was nothing in the Bill—it was a matter for consideration whether it should be put in the Bill—to provide that the licence should be finally cancelled, yet it would be in the power of the Home Secretary to effect that by his prerogative. But there was a further safeguard. If a man when released did not observe the conditions of his licence, he would be liable on summary process to be taken straight back to the place of detention, where he would have to start *de novo* and would experience great difficulty in being released again, because he would have already shown that he was not to be trusted. Even if the Committee and the Home Secretary made a mistake in letting a man out, the moment he did something in violation of the conditions of his licence he would be brought back by summary process into detention.

Consequently, a man would be inclined to think twice before breaking the conditions of his licence. If moral influences failed, there would remain this formidable incentive to mend his ways. Experiments would have to be made and no doubt mistakes would be made, but that would not matter much so long as they had a hold over these men which would enable the State to prevent them leading a life of plunder. He asked the House to read the Bill a second time. Its main principles had the support of the great majority of those who through their profession or by study had accurate knowledge of crime and its treatment. The Government proposed to give the State effective control over dangerous offenders. In providing what he trusted would be an effective remedy for an admitted evil, they had regard to methods in no case "postulating incorrigibility" and designed to clear the courts and the prisons of the very worst criminals and to make easier the possibilities of general prison reform.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said that the very interesting speech of the Home Secretary had only strengthened him in his opposition to the second part of the Bill which dealt with habitual criminals. There was no doubt about the issue between himself and the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary claimed the right in certain cases to say: "This person has set himself against society and the laws of property connected with society; this man is an habitual thief, therefore, I am entitled to lock him up for the rest of his life, subject to certain relief." He ventured to say that that was not a movement in the direction of a more humane treatment of criminals; it was a mistaken movement; it was a retrograde movement. There were two classes of habitual criminals to be dealt with. In the first place, there was the regular professional criminal, who had been guilty of acts of violence, or armed burglary, and who was, therefore, a danger to life as well as to property. In such a case a Judge would not hesitate to pass a sentence of a long period of penal servitude. On such a criminal as that, this Bill, if carried into operation, would have very little effect. The second type of habitual criminal was the man who had given trouble to everyone who had to administer the criminal law—a class with which this Bill signally failed to deal. He was a man who habitually stole small articles of the value of 10s. or perhaps of even £1, who came into Court again and again, and was convicted, and sent to prison again and again. In dealing with that type of man there were two distinct views held. The view of the Home Secretary was that that man was an habitual criminal, and that if he were let out of prison he was sure to come back again; therefore, he should be locked up for as long a period as possible, unless he reformed. The other view was that held by such authorities as the late Lord Coleridge, viz., that it was a mistake to send a man for a long period of penal servitude who was repeatedly convicted of simply stealing a particular article of a less value than £1, not accompanied by violence. He maintained that this Bill would break down in operation in dealing with that class of criminal. What did the Home Secretary propose to do with such a man? He was to be regarded as an habitual criminal within the meaning of the Bill, and that charge was to be made against him the next time he came before the Quarter Sessions or a Court of Assize, with the leave of the Public Prosecutor—which, however, was no safeguard at all—and the jury doing their duty would find that he was an habitual criminal. He quite agreed with the Home Secretary that the jury and not the Judge would be the determining factor in this matter. But very grave results might follow. The jury, knowing what the effect of their verdict would be, viz., that the man might be locked up for life, might decline to find him to be an habitual criminal, and the Act would become a dead letter. If the jury found this man to be a habitual criminal, the Court would be bound to send the man to penal servitude for a certain number of years, and then to an indeterminate term of detention in a prison or part of a prison. He contended that such a course of action could not be justified by any precedent in English law at the present time. It was true that during this indeterminate detention the man, under prison rules—which, however, were not before the House—was to be allowed to earn money and certain relaxations; but if he did not get on with the prison authorities, he would not get out of prison at all. An hon. Member whose care in the conduct of criminal matters was acknowleged, had told the House that the only people qualified to deal with prisoners in regard to the remission of their sentences were the people who were in the habit of seeing the prisoners every day—the warders, the chaplains, the governors, etc.

Mr. GLADSTONE pointed out that the Directors of Convict Prisons in their reports to the Home Secretary were to be assisted by a committee at each prison consisting of the governor and such members of the board of visitors, and such other persons as the Secretary of State might from time to time appoint.

Mr. RAWLINSON said that even with that modification the prisoner was to be tried before a committee which was somewhat indeterminate; and therefore he was justified in saying that unless the prisoner managed to hit it off with the prison authorities he was in there for life. He put it whether it was a desirable thing thus to punish a man who had never been guilty of a crime of violence or of a serious crime, but only of a crime against property and society, unless he was able to persuade those in charge of him that he was a fit and proper person to be released. The Home Secretary had asked those who did not approve of the Bill what they would do with habitual criminals such as had been described. He would say in answer to that, in the first place, that it was not his duty in criticising a Bill which brought forward far too drastic a method of dealing with crime to provide the Home Secretary with an alternative policy. But there was an alternative policy which had been agitated for a long time, and that was the substitution for penal servitude and lifelong detention, something in the nature of labour farms where the men would be under control and where they would be largely self-supporting. With such institutions the Court, when it did not wish to send a prisoner to penal servitude, might sentence him for a definite period to work under proper supervision and with the hope of obtaining certain advantages in the form of earning money and remission of sentence. He always thought that it was the intention of the Government to have carried out that method of dealing with prisoners; but it seemed that it did not now commend itself to the Government, and hence they had introduced this measure which was largely founded on one brought before the House by his right hon. friend the Home Secretary in the late Government. He might say that he had told his right hon. friend that he was mistaken in his policy, and that he was strengthened in that opinion by the fact that when his right hon. friend introduced his Bill some years ago, not a single occupant of the Front Treasury Bench at present voted in favour of it, and the majority voted against it. That was all he had to say in regard to what he called the harsher part of the Bill now before the House.

Generally speaking, he insisted that a sentence upon a prisoner should be for a definite term, after serving which the man should be free. The indeterminate sentence was bad; and it was also unwise to sweep away the distinction between punishment for crimes of violence and crimes against property. He wished to acknowledge the great debt the House was under to the Home Secretary personally for the deep interest he had taken in this important question. Something had already been said about the Borstal system and the excellent work done by those who were engaged in promoting it. It was not everybody who knew what the Borstal system was, although it was referred to in the Bill as if they did. It was rather an innovation to put into the first section of a Bill that a Borstal institution should be set up. He questioned whether many hon. Members had any very clear idea of what a Borstal institution was; and he pointed out that the cases treated by the Borstal system in this country did not amount to 200 altogether, so that the movement was still in its experimental stage. When an institution or association was formed, it was often the personal influence of a particular man that made it a success, and the Borstal Association had been working in exceptionally good circumstances, and as far as it had gone it had undoubtedly been a success. Its president was the right hon. Gentleman himself, a most careful man with every desire to make the system as perfect as it possibly could be. The system applied to young men only, but now, as he understood, the right hon. Gentleman intended that it should extend to young women as well. This matter, moreover, would be an exceedingly expensive one, and they were giving an absolutely blank cheque of other people's money for the purpose. They were dealing very largely with public money, and there was no restriction placed upon it when this power was given under the Bill. But anyone, however thoroughly in sympathy with the work of the Borstal Association as carried out at present, must doubt whether, when these institutions came to be multiplied, the same able men would always be found to take charge of them. It might also be doubted whether the Bill was a businesslike Bill. It was intended to deal with young people. Of course, everyone was anxious that young offenders should be dealt with properly. The question was whether this Bill so dealt with them; but of the people convicted under twenty-one it would not touch half. The majority of people in the ordinary gaols were people who had gone to prison in default of paying a fine. One would have thought that if anybody was entitled to assistance it was the person who had been sent to goal simply because he could not pay a small sum of money. That, he thought, was a great blot on a Bill dealing with offenders under the age of twenty-one. It was a delusive hope to imagine that a man could be taught a trade in one year. But habits of work could be inculcated, and a person put in the way of being able to earn his livelihood, but here again he would remind the House that the great use of the Borstal system was the Committee which was constituted at the present time to look after these men after they left prison. Whether the Government undertaking that duty would be as successful in looking after women as well as men was very doubtful. The questions involved in the Bill were important questions of principle, and he was opposed to the Bill because he was opposed to its principles. He was not opposed to it because of the power it gave to the present Home Secretary, and if the right hon. Gentleman were to remain permanently in office no one would object to these powers being conferred upon him, but sooner or later the right hon. Gentleman and his friends would be convicted and sentenced to a long term of detention in opposition, and this was too great a power to put in the hands of any Government Department.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said he only desired to say one or two words because as in all probability the Bill would be sent to a Committee upstairs, and in that case he would not have the opportunity of putting the points which he desired to put. He was thoroughly in favour of the Bill, but he would like to point out that, in the Report of the Pentonville Committee, it was shown that people out of work would deliberately go to gaol because they knew they would be treated under the Borstal system. There was a danger of making gaol too pleasant, and in the interests of the criminals themselves there would be no advantage in that. He thought, therefore, it was desirable that there should be a preliminary sentence. With that proviso he was in favour of the Borstal institution. He looked with great disfavour on Clause 3 and did not think this experiment should be extended without further discussion with the Department. He also thought some limitation should be put upon Clause 5. As to the indeterminate sentence, he was tremendously impressed by the observation of the Home Secretary that the habitual criminal must be dealt with in some way or other. It was a scandal that we should deal with him by constantly sending him to terms of imprisonment. It was a great expense to the country, and subjected the man to perpetual cruelty. He was sorry to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that the Bill was intended to deal only with the professional criminal. The habitual criminal was a more worthless person than the professional criminal, and a person more in want of treatment. If the right hon. Gentleman preserved the condition that there must be a sentence of penal servitude, he would cut out practically the whole class of habitual criminals who lived by perpetually committing the same miserable little crime. He knew, for instance, of a man who constantly stole pewter pots. No sooner was he released from imprisonment for stealing a pewter pot than he went into the next public-house and stole another. He also knew of an old lady who always stole bacon. She was an admirable person but for this taste for stealing bacon. She was well conducted in gaol and pious, but the moment she came out she stole bacon again. There should be some means of detaining such cases; but the power of detaining for an indeterminate period, which was a great departure from the present criminal law, ought to be guarded, and he thought it should be confined to Judges of the High Court. Everybody would agree that Chairmen of Quarter Sessions did their duty admirably; nevertheless, this was a very large power to give them. He, however, saw no reason why they should not say that before a man was sentenced to an indeterminate period of detention he must be committed to the Assizes. One objection to the requirement of penal servitude was that it might induce Judges to impose penal servitude in cases where they would otherwise have refrained. It was evident from a marginal note of the Bill that the Government contemplated a sentence of imprisonment as well. Other precautions ought to be taken in this matter. There ought to be an annual Return to Parliament showing the names of all those undergoing these indeterminate sentences. As to the indeterminate sentence itself he did not feel very much impressed by his learned friend's criticisms as to the authority. So far as he understood the Bill preserved the authority absolutely to the Home Secretary, who, no doubt, acted on the advice of those who assisted him. It would give a certain power to the Government of the day, but the

Home Secretary could be trusted. The clause was very widely drawn indeed and preserved to the Home Secretary and those who advised him the power to let a man out if they had good reason for so doing. As to the different governors of the gaols somebody must be trusted, and he thought, checked as they would be by the other officials of the gaol, it was unlikely that for the purposes of spite, or because he happened to be a martinet, a man would desire to keep a person in prison when he felt he could fairly apply for his release. At this experimental stage there was something to be said in favour of an indeterminate sentence not exceeding ten or fifteen years. He agreed most heartily with the hon. Member for Basingstoke that it should be made abundantly clear on the face of the Bill that a man who behaved properly had a right to be at liberty, not liberty subject to supervision, but absolute liberty. If he acted in such a way as to earn his freedom he then had a claim to it as a matter of right. He believed the Bill would mark an important stage in the reform of the criminal law. It had long been wanted. He believed every Judge of the High Court would agree that the present system of dealing with habitual criminals was hopelessly bad, and that some change of this kind was necessary. He hoped, however, that the Home Secretary would abandon those portions of the Bill which had obviously not met with the approval of the House, and might greatly militate against its rapid passage into law.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that when he came down to the House he was inclined to support the Bill, but having listened to two speeches from hon. friends of his he had been constrained to change his mind and had come to the conclusion that there was much that was bad in the Bill and very little that was good. His noble friend the Member for East Marylebone had said that he was in favour of the Bill, but in his speech he had intimated that the Borstal system was little known, and that people who were not great criminals, but who for some reason or other indulged in a life of petty crime, would persist in it in order to be put into a comfortable place. That was a matter that ought to be considered. Another question for consideration was the question of the Rules. He had read a very interesting debate upon the subject of certain Rules which the Home Secretary was empowered to make in 1904. The Member for Accrington, Mr. Green, K.C., then a Member of this House, and no less a gentleman than the present Secretary of State for War, both said with regard to the Bill then under discussion that if it was to become law the Rules should be put into the Bill that the House might know what they were before they were passed. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Accrington said it was no safeguard to lay those Rules upon the Table of the House for forty days; that he had never seen any Rules laid on the Table, and did not know where to look for any that were supposed to be so laid. The truth was that nobody knew whether these Rules were laid on the Table of the House or not, and the Home Secretary or the permanent official—the responsible person for the time being—could do as he liked. He himself knew the right hon. Gentleman, but no one could know who the Home Secretary would be in thirty years to come, and he objected to placing these powers in the hands of any official. The present occupant of the office was certainly a fit and proper person, but nobody could tell if his successors would be. As he understood, the Government would have the power to keep a man in prison for the rest of his life. It was a great power to give to an official whoever he might be, the power of confining a person for ever in a prison or institution. As he understood, a very small offence might, under this Bill, entitle the right hon. Gentleman to confine the offender for life. He was not sure that a suffragette would not be subject to a life confinement if she was convicted and sentenced to three or four terms of penal servitude. The faith which he had in this Bill before he came down to the House had been very much shaken, and he much regretted that the time did not permit him to enlarge as he would have liked to have done upon this subject. In order, however, that a decision might be taken he would now sit down.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 133; Noes, 11 (Division List No. 117).

AYES.

Abraham, William(Cork, N.E.)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Baker, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Beauchamp, E.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Byles, William Pollard
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clive, Percy Archer
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dixon-Hartland,Sir FredDixon
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Flynn, James Christopher
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gurdon,Rt Hn SirW. Brampton
Harcourt,RobertV.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hart-Davies, T.
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Hills, J. W.
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamont, Norman
Lever,A.Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Massie, J.
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien,Kendal(TipperaryMid.
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearson, W. H.M.(Suffolk,Eye)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rees, J. D.
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Starkey, John R.
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thorne, G.R.(Wolverhampton)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Watt, Henry A.
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Younger, George
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cooper, G. J.
Grayson, Albert Victor
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Stanier, Beville
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Thorne, William (West Ham)

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Belloc and Mr. John Ward.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at eight minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

Sir F. Banbury.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 15th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [Lords] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.)

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.: Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, "That the Bill be read a second time."

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. Speaker laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.:—Marriages Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill.

Ordered, "That, the Bills be read a second time to-morrow."

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Lords Amendments considered:—Lords Amendments to the Amendment in page 7, line 20, agreed to; Lords Amendment, in page 7, line 20, after Clause 6, to insert Clause 6a, the remaining Amendment, read a second time, amended, and agreed to.

Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

PETITIONS.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Beeston, against alteration of Clause 20; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Bacup; Coggeshall; Deptford; Dulwich; Mexborough; and Newport (Mon.) (three); to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of Millwall Dock Company, against alterations, praying to be heard by counsel; to lie upon the Table.

TILONKO.

Petition of Tilonko, a chief of the Embo tribe of Zulus, for inquiry into his case; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Rule made by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland appointing the places at which Examinations for 1908 shall be held [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented, of Rule made by the Intermediate Board for Ireland determining the number of Centre Superintendents to conduct the Examinations in the year 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNEMPLOYED WORKMEN ACT, 1905.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 11th June; *Mr. Burns*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 173.]

EAST INDIA (PRESS ACT).

Copy presented, of Full Text of Indian Press Act VII. of 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 27th May; *Mr. Buchanan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 174.]

AFRICA (No. 3, 1908).

Copy presented, of Correspondence respecting the Taxation of Natives and other Questions in the Congo State [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SAVINGS BANKS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Accounts presented, showing the interest accrued in respect of the Securities standing in the names of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt to the credit of the Post Office Savings Bank Fund for the year ended 31st December, 1907, and of the Fund for the Banks for Savings and the Fund for Friendly Societies for the year ended 20th November, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 175.]

NEWFOUNDLAND (BRITISH TRADE).

Copy presented, of Report upon the Conditions and Prospects of British Trade in Newfoundland by the Special Commissioner of the Advisory Committee on Commercial Intelligence of the Board of Trade [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Rules made by the Board of Trade [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (PROCESS OF CASTING BRASS).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by William Wills, esquire, Barrister-at-Law, on the Draft Regulations proposed to be made for Factories in which the process of Casting Brass is carried on [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Intermediate Education (Ireland).—Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure for 1907, with Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 176.]

Inquiry into Charities (County of Berks).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 28th March, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*].

Inquiry into Charities (Administrative County of Devon).—Further Return relative thereto [ordered 26th July, 1905; *Mr. Griffith-Boscawen*].

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (NON-CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME) (CORRESPONDENCE).

Copy ordered, "of Circular Letter issued by the Chief Registrar to the principal Friendly Societies with reference to proposed Non-Contributory Scheme dealing with the subject of Old-Age Pensions, together with Abstract of their replies thereto."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 177.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Duties of Sorting Clerk at Glasgow.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that Officer No. 40, in the class of sorting clerks at Glasgow, has, with one short interval of three weeks, been continuously employed on clerical duties for over twelve years; whether the said officer, although said to be physically unfit for the ordinary duties of the sorting office, has been allowed to work a considerable number of hours in excess of his regular duties; how many hours overtime he put in during the four months ending February last; has he seen the medical certificate supplied by the officer's private doctor; and whether he will see that other members of the staff will now be afforded an opportunity of rotating on the clerical duties so long monopolised by this one man.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The exceptional treatment accorded to the officer in question was justified by the very exceptional features of his case and was apparently acquiesced in by his brother officers, no protest or complaint upon the subject having been received either from individuals or from those qualified to speak as the representatives of his class.

Seamen sent as Consul Passengers—Case of William Harris.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that several cases of hardship have recently been caused to seamen at the port of Southampton in consequence of the Government officials abroad failing to fill in the necessary and proper forms on behalf of seamen who have been sent as consul passengers to the port of Southampton; whether he is aware that seamen have been detained several days at Southampton waiting the arrival of the necessary forms; if his attention has been called to the case of William Harris, who was serving on the barque "Caithness-shire," and was discharged at Bahia in consequence of sickness; whether he is aware that this man was kept for nine or ten days at Southampton, and unable to proceed to his destination, in consequence of charges being made against his wages which were not justifiable; and what steps, if any, the Board of Trade intend to take to put a stop to this complaint in the future.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I regret that in certain cases, including that referred to by my hon. friend, delay has arisen in the payment of the balance of wages due to seamen sent home by officers abroad owing to insufficient information having been furnished by those officers on the conveyance form to enable the superintendent at the port of landing to determine the amount due to the seaman. In such cases the attention of the officer is always called to the omission, and when the officers become more familiar with the alteration in the law effected by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, and the consequent alteration in the conveyance form, this cause of delay will, it is hoped, disappear.

Manning of the Steamer "Thornley."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has received any report with regard to the manning of the steamer "Thornley" of 2,847 tons gross; whether he is aware that this vessel only carries five able seamen and a lamp trimmer, and that two able seamen are told off to do all the steering and look-out, whilst the lamp trimmer and deck hands are taken from the regular watches to do day work; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made with regard to this matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) My attention has been called by the Seamen and Firemen's Union to this case. On the return of the vessel to this country inquiries shall be made and the result communicated to my hon. friend in due course.

Manning of the Steamer "Linwood."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the manning of the steamer "Linwood"; whether he is aware that this steamer of 1,670 tons only carries four able seamen and two apprentices; if he is aware that there is a system prevailing on this ship of allowing one apprentice and one able seaman to do the steering and look-out whilst the other deck hands are taken out of their regular watches to do day work; and whether he will cause inquiries to be made as to whether the watches on this ship have been properly kept.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) My attention has also been called by the Seamen and Firemen's Union to the case referred to in the Question; and inquiries shall be made and the result communicated to my hon. friend in due course.

Feeding of the Crew of the "Mantinea."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause inquiries to be made with reference to the complaint of the crew of the steamer "Mantinea," owned by Messrs. Thompson and Co., of Liverpool and St. John's, New Brunswick; whether he is aware that the crew of this ship allege that the coffee and tea supplied were unfit for use, that margarine was supplied instead of butter, and that although the new scale of provisions provides that the crew shall have salt pork, they have had none during the present voyage; and whether he is also aware that the captain of this vessel has refused to allow the men to have money for the purpose of purchasing clothing and other necessaries.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Yes, Sir. Inquiries shall be made into the complaints referred to in the Question, with regard to which I have at present no information.

Administration of Anæsthetics.

Sir W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to take any action or to introduce any legislation with a view to secure that anæsthetics shall not be administered except by persons who have been duly instructed in their administration and use.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I am making inquiries into the question of the administration of anæsthetics, as I have mentioned in answer to previous Questions, but I am not in a position to make any further statement at the present time.

Pay of Male Telephone Night Operators.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the wages paid to male telephone night operators in London; whether he can state what increased wage he is prepared to pay to men who are qualified in the use of colloquial French, such as is necessary for the service of the Continental telephone service by night; and what are the wages now paid to the two foreigners for the performance of this duty.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Night operators in London when employed full time are paid wages of 20s. a week till efficient, and then from 25s. to 30s. a week. Those employed on part-time duties are paid 10s. till efficient, and then from 12s. 6d. to 15s. a week. I have not considered it necessary to pay any increased wage for a knowledge of colloquial French. The present wages of the two foreigners who are employed in the London trunk exchange are 30s. and 20s. a week respectively. The one receiving 20s. is not yet efficient in English conversation.

British War Vessels transporting the Duke of Connaught and Suite.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what ships of the British Navy were detached from their ordinary duties in the Channel or the Mediterranean for the purpose of transporting the Duke of Connaught or members of his family or staff during 1907 and 1908, specifying in each case the name of the vessel employed and the number of days it was detached for this service; and also the extra charges, if any, so incurred.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The "Aboukir" was detached for this service for forty-four days during 1907 and 1908. During this time, 2,834 tons of coal, 1,578 gallons of oil, 538 pounds of cotton waste, and 525 pounds of lime were expended; but it is impossible to say how much of this expenditure of stores can be attributed solely to the particular service in question.

Grant for Irish Forestry.

Mr. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received copies of Resolutions of the county council of the County Waterford and of other public bodies in Ireland calling attention to the recommendations in the Report of the Departmental Commission on Irish Forestry; and whether, in view of the importance attached in Ireland to the preservation of woods and plantations and their extension, he can now announce that the annual grant suggested in the Report of the Committee will be made available.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) My attention has been frequently called to the Report to which the hon. Member refers, and, as I have already stated, it is receiving the careful consideration of the Government; but I am not in a position as yet to make any statement on the subject.

Recommendations of the Irish Forestry Committee.

MR. O'SHEE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a resolution of the Waterford County Council endorsing the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Irish Forestry; whether the Report of the Committee has been considered by the Irish Government; and, if so, what steps have been taken with reference to it.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have received the resolution in question. The recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Irish Forestry are, at present, under the consideration of my hon. friend the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture, and the question of legislation will in due course receive the consideration of the Government.

Rank of Officers retiring as Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels.

SIR ARTHUR BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say, with reference to an officer listed as lieutenant-colonel retired with the honorary rank of major-general, whether such officer, retired prior to the signing of the warrant of 1887 and having attained the rank of colonel after four years service as lieutenant-colonel, and having continued to serve while holding the higher rank, is to be credited in the official Army Lists with having held the rank of colonel while serving.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Retired pay officers are shown in the quarterly Army List in lists according to the highest substantive rank they held on retirement, and when they hold brevet or honorary rank superior to their substantive rank the highest brevet or honorary rank is shown against their names. The Army List does not, however, purport to show the history of the retired officers included, but only facts relevant to retirement. The officers in question, therefore, have their highest honorary rank, that of major-general, shown after their names.

Territorial Engineer Quartermasters.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Royal Engineer Volunteer Corps' whose establishments include a quartermaster, will, after transfer to the Territorial Force as Divisional Royal Engineer units, be permitted to retain a quartermaster upon their new establishment; and, if not, for what reasons this change is being made.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state upon whom the obligation will be placed to carry out the duties, hitherto performed by the quartermaster, in connection with the annual training of a Divisional Royal Engineer unit; whether special pay will be given for such services; and whether it is anticipated that those who have to perform such services will be able to give, in addition to the period of training, the necessary time, immediately before and after the training, which these services require.

MR. COURTHOPE: To ask the Secretary of State for War what will be the position of quartermasters of the Royal Engineer Volunteer Corps who have expressed a wish to be transferred to the Territorial Force.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The whole question of the inclusion of quartermasters in the establishments of Royal Engineer units of the Territorial Force is under consideration. I will see that the hon. Member is informed as soon as a decision is reached.

Territorial Camp Leave for Ordnance Factory Labourers.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will state why the mechanical labourers, and other classes of labourers who are not Civil servants, employed in the Royal Ordnance Factories do not receive leave with pay whilst in camp for training with the Territorial Army; and whether the State will act to its employees in the same manner that many of the large employers of labour are doing to their employees by granting them leave with pay when called upon to carry out their military duties.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The hon. and gallant Member has been misinformed. These men come under the regulations granting special leave to Civil servants attending Territorial Force camps.

Accidents to Railway Servants.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the numbers respectively of the following classes of railway servants employed and killed or injured on the railways in the United Kingdom during the year 1907, viz., goods guards and brakesmen, permanent-way men or platelayers, and shunters, from accidents to trains, the movement of vehicles, and other causes, the figures being given on the same basis as those on pages 6 and 7 of the Report of the Royal Commission on Accidents to Railway Servants, 1900.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The following statement gives the information desired by my hon. friend :—

Table showing the number of Persons employed by Railway Companies in the year 1907 as Goods Guards and Brakesmen, Permanent-way Men or Platelayers, and Shunters, the numbers killed and injured in Accidents to Trains and by the movement of Railway Vehicles, and the proportion per 1,000 of the killed and injured to the number employed—

Occupation.	Number employed.	Killed.		Injured.	
		Numbers.	Numbers per thousand employed.	Numbers.	Numbers per thousand employed.
Goods guards and brakesmen -	16,786	41	2·44	1,035	62
Permanent-way men -	67,184	89	1·32	175	2·6
Shunters - - -	13,158	39	2·97	997	76

From causes other than accidents to trains or the movement of railway vehicles, 438 goods guards and brakesmen were injured, six permanent-way men were killed, and 2,134 injured, and one shunter was killed and 220 injured in 1907. In comparing the figures relating to non-fatal accidents with those for earlier years, allowance must be made for the alteration of the definition of reportable accidents effected by the Board's Order of December, 1906.

Sugar Prices in London, Paris, and Berlin.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the average retail prices for the ordinary quality of sugar sold in London, Paris, and Berlin, for each of the ten years 1898 to 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Particulars of the retail prices of sugar in London, Paris, and Berlin, on 1st March of each of the years 1903–7 were published in the Return entitled Sugar Cost, London, Paris, and Berlin, issued as a House of Commons Paper, No. 332, of last session. I fear it may be difficult to get corresponding particulars for earlier years, but I will see what can be done in this direction.

Prices of Beet Sugar.

MR. LOUGH: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state the monthly standard prices of 88 per cent. beet sugar, f.o.b. Hamburg, during the last ten years, and the average prices for each of those years; also the dates on which the original Sugar Convention was signed, came into operation, and the adhesion of Russia was agreed to.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The following statement gives the monthly averages of the weekly quotations per cwt. for 88 per cent., beet sugar (German) f.o.b. "off coast for United Kingdom," in each year from 1899 to 1908, inclusive (compiled from Messrs. Czarnikow's—"Weekly Price Current.")

Months.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
January - - -	9 5½	9 4½	9 1	6 6¾	8 0½	8 0	15 8¼	8 2¾	8 10	9 11¼
February - -	9 7½	9 7¾	9 3¼	6 9	8 0	7 10	15 4¼	8 1	8 11¼	9 11½
March - - -	9 11½	9 10¾	9 1¼	6 5	8 4¼	8 3¼	14 8	8 5	9 2½	10 10¾
April - - -	10 9¼	10 5¼	8 10¾	6 3¾	8 7½	8 6¼	13 6	8 5¼	9 4½	11 8
May - - -	11 2¼	10 8	Nominal	6 3¼	8 4¼	9 4¼	12 1	8 0¾	9 11	11 4½
June - - -	11 1	10 11¾	9 4¾	6 1½	8 0	9 3¼	11 9	8 2¾	9 9¼	11 3*
July - - -	10 8½	11 10	Nominal	6 0¼	7 11¼	9 7¾	10 6	8 6	9 8	—
August - - -	10 4¾	12 0	8 1½	6 1¾	8 5¼	10 5¼	9 7¾	9 2	9 10¾	—
September - -	9 11¼	11 2¼	7 9¾	6 1¾	8 6	10 10½	8 8¼	9 6¼	10 1¼	—
October - - -	9 2	9 6	7 5	7 1¼	8 4¾	11 0	8 6	9 4½	9 6	—
November - -	9 0¾	9 3¾	7 3	7 7	8 2¾	13 5¾	8 2½	8 9¾	9 4	—
December - -	9 1½	9 2¾	7 1¾	8 1¼	8 3¾	14 1	8 3¼	8 11½	9 7¾	—
Average for the year	10 0½	10 4	8 4¼	6 7½	8 3¼	10 0¾	11 4¾	8 7¾	9 6¼	10 10*

* To 11th June only.

The Brussels Sugar Convention was signed on 5th March, 1902, and came into force on 1st September, 1903. Russia adhered to the Convention by virtue of a protocol signed on 19th December, 1907.

Admiralty Hired Writers and Civil Service Established Positions.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the confidential nature of the work entrusted to writers, any steps will be taken to place the hired men who are at present performing such work in the more responsible position of established Civil servants.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) My hon. friend is no doubt alluding to the recent decision of the Admiralty to abolish the grade of established first-class writers, and in future to bear on the hired list all writers below the grade of senior writers. This decision was arrived at after full consideration of all the circumstances, including the character of the work performed by the writers in question, and the present Board of Admiralty do not think that there is any ground for departing from it.

Concessions to Chargemen of Shipwrights.

MR. E. H. LAMB: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is his intention to withhold the concessions granted to a limited number of chargemen of shipwrights from the remaining chargemen and from the chargemen of other trades; and, if so, whether he will state in what respects their various duties have ceased to be of equal responsibility.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The duties of chargemen are not now and never have been invariably of equal responsibility; but the matter has again been made the subject of a petition by the chargemen, and will be further considered in due course.

Locomotive Licences.

MAJOR COATES (Lewisham): To ask the President of the Local Government Board how many locomotive licences, under Sec. 9 of the Locomotive Act, 1898, were issued by each licensing authority in England and Wales, respectively, in 1907; what fees for such licences are charged in each county; and how many of those taking out such licences in each county were resident in such county.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I regret that I am not able to supply the information desired by the hon. Member.

Branding of Pure Nut Butter.

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that the branding of pure nut butter, which contains no animal fat, with the word margarine, as required by the Board, is calculated to diminish its sale; and whether the Board will approve some other description which will be less likely to cause misunderstanding.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The expression "margarine" is defined by the Butter and Margarine Act, 1907, as meaning "any article of food, whether mixed with butter or not, which resembles butter and is not milk-blended butter." If the article to which my hon. friend refers comes within that definition the Acts require its marking with the word "margarine," and the Board have no authority to sanction the use of any other description for it.

Belfast Collector of Customs.

COLONEL McCALMONT (Antrim, E.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the collector of Customs in Belfast is so frequently absent from his office as to be a cause of inconvenience to persons doing business at the Custom House and who may wish to consult him; and if it is necessary for the collector to do the surveyor's duties, when for these duties there is an ample staff of officials with salaries ranging from £400 to £600 per annum.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Board of Customs inform me that on inquiry they have been unable to find evidence of any complaint having been made on the subject raised in the Question, by persons doing business in the Custom House, Belfast. As regards the last part of the Question, I presume the hon. and gallant Member refers to the regular visits of an inspectorial character made by the collector to the bonded warehouses under his charge. These visits are made in the interests of the Revenue, under the directions of the Board, with a view to ascertaining that adequate supervision is being maintained over the business carried on in these warehouses, in which large stocks of high duty goods are deposited. In so doing the collector does not perform the duties of a surveyor (the salary of which grade ranges not from £400 to £600 but from £350 to £550), but, as I have stated, is carrying out the special directions of the Board in a manner which they inform me meets with their entire approval.

Colonel McCALMONT: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Board of Customs recently promoted to Belfast a collector sixty-three years of age; and whether, seeing that the Board of Inland Revenue insist upon superannuation at the age of sixty-two, he will consider the desirability with a view to the efficiency of the public service, of not placing an official of such advanced years in charge of an important port such as Belfast.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) It is the case that the Board of Customs in November last promoted to Belfast a collector who was within a few days of sixty-three years of age. They were fully satisfied as to his special suitability for the post, and the selection was made with due regard to the departmental principle of retention in the service, until they reach sixty-five years of age, of those officers only who are fully efficient.

Restoration of Evicted Tenants on the Drew Estate.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say why the Estates Commissioners will not put into operation the Evicted Tenants Act to restore the evicted tenants to their farms on the Drew estate, situate at Ballygran, in the County of Limerick, having regard to the fact that these lands are a grazing ranch in the landlord's hands.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The landlord has expressed his willingness to allow an inspection to be made of the holdings at Ballygran formerly occupied by John Hartnett and Mary Carey, evicted tenants, and the Estates Commissioners have directed their inspector to make an inspection accordingly, and to estimate a price for the lands.

Salary of Irish Interpreter for the Galway Division.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that before 1898 a separate Irish interpreter was paid for the town of Galway, he will take steps to increase the salary now paid to the interpreter for the Galway division of the county, whose duties comprise those performed by two separate officials before the passing of the Local Government Act of 1898.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I regret that I am not in a position to add anything to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member's Question on this subject on 27th March, 1907. As I then indicated, it would require special legislation to enable the county council to increase the existing payments to interpreters. I cannot introduce separate legislation with that object, but the matter will be considered in the event of legislation being undertaken to amend the Local Government Acts.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Foreland (Isle of Wight) Coastguard.

Mr. GODFREY BARING (Isle of Wight): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Coastguard detachment stationed at the Foreland, Isle of Wight, is about to be abolished; and whether, in view of the declaration of the Secretary to the Admiralty that no Coastguard detachment should be withdrawn which assisted either in watching the coast or in launching lifeboats, he will cause inquiry to be made as to whether the Coastguard detachment at the Foreland fulfils both these conditions.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): This matter is still under consideration.

Naval Discipline.

Captain ARTHUR MURRAY (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the First

Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the relations existing between the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet and the Commander of the First Cruiser Squadron are now a matter of public comment; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take to bring to an end the present situation, having regard to the preservation of discipline in the Navy.

MR. McKENNA: I am aware that some observations have been made in certain newspapers as to the personal relations between the officers referred to, but I do not suppose that my hon. and gallant friend would wish me to pay attention to gossip of this description.

CAPTAIN ARTHUR MURRAY: Arising out of that Answer, may I ask whether it is the case that the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet and the First Sea Lord are not on speaking terms?

[No Answer was returned.]

Navy Butter Contracts.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can say whether any contract has been given to Messrs. Pearks and Company for Pearksown milk-blended butter; and, if so, can he say whether any tenders were received for butter for the same purpose; and whether preference was given to milk-blended butter, and for what reason.

MR. McKENNA: No contract has been given by the Admiralty to Messrs. Pearks and Company for Pearksown milk-blended butter.

Willenhall Drill Hall.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has now seen the letter sent by Sergeant-Instructor Evatts declining to allow the use of the drill hall at Willenhall for Socialistic meetings; whether there was any mention of Sunday meetings in the letter, or whether it was a general refusal; and whether he has now made any communication to the authorities concerned which will secure in future equal treatment to all political parties.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): It appears that the use of the hall was applied for on two occasions. The first application for 3rd May was refused on the ground that it was a Sunday. The second application for any date open was refused by Sergeant-Instructor Evatts, who is in charge of the hall, because he had heard that if the meeting in question was held there it would probably be broken up with damage to property. He accordingly refused to run the risk of any damage to the property in his charge. His action is endorsed by his military superiors. I understand that the meeting held elsewhere on 3rd May was broken up, and a prominent speaker who is a Member of this House had to execute a swift strategic movement to the rear, so Sergeant-Instructor Evatts' action appears justified by the facts.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Then I understand that my previous Question was absolutely correct, and the right hon. Gentleman was only drawing on some one's imagination. [Cries of "Order."]

[No Answer was returned.]

The Special Reserve.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why men over thirty-six are retained in the Army Reserve when such men are excluded from the Special Reserve.

MR. HALDANE: These men are retained to finish their engagements. Men enlist up to twenty-five, and having put in seven years with the colours and five with the Reserve that brings them over thirty-six before they finish their engagement. They are simply allowed to finish their engagement. But the great bulk of the men are under thirty-six at they time they finish; there are comparatively few over.

MR. ASHLEY: Why is a difference made between Special Reservists and ordinary Reservists?

MR. HALDANE: There is no analogy between the two cases.

Supply of Horses for the Army.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can now give any information regarding the steps he is taking to ensure an adequate supply of horses for military purposes in case of war.

MR. HALDANE: No, Sir. I have nothing as yet to add to the information I have already given the hon. and gallant Member on this subject.

Woolwich Army Service Corps Mess.

MR. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the charges of stealing broken food brought before Mr. Baggallay and Mr. Nixon at Woolwich Police Court and the remarks made by the magistrates thereon; and whether he will institute an inquiry into the mess arrangements of the Army Service Corps at Woolwich Barracks.

MR. HALDANE: An inquiry is being held into this matter.

Cadet Corps.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number and names of the public schools having cadet corps, and how these will be attached to the Territorial Army.

MR. HALDANE: There are about 150 schools which have cadet companies and corps, and their names are shown on pages iv. to vi. of the Table of Contents of the Army List. As I have already explained to the House, a certain number will be asked to join the officers training corps, and the future *status* of the other cadet corps will be considered by the County Associations as soon as they have had time to work out the main questions connected with the Territorial Force which now claim their attention.

The Yeomanry.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state the number of officers, men, and horses in the various Yeomanry regiments who were efficient and non-efficient in the years 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908.

MR. HALDANE: No figures are published showing the officers and men technically "efficient." The Returns of the trainings of the Yeomanry regiments annually published will give figures of men present and absent with or without leave, and also the horses. Cd. 3799 is that containing the 1907 figures. I hope a reference to these Returns will be sufficient for the noble Earl's purpose, as to give the figures in the form asked for would involve the preparation of a special and lengthy Return.

Pearksown Milk-blended Butter.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if any contract has been given to Messrs. Pearks for Pearksown milk-blended butter; and, if so, for what purpose.

MR. HALDANE: Contracts for such supplies are placed locally, and without further details as to the locality it is not practicable to trace the contract.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman say if any such contracts have been given?

MR. HALDANE: No, Sir.

Transvaal Gold Law.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have received a reply to their communication to the Governor of the Transvaal on the subject of the draft Gold Law of that Colony, especially in respect of Sections 127 and 128 thereof, under which special disabilities are to be imposed upon coloured persons, including British-Indians.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): We are still awaiting the reply of the Governor to the questions on this subject addressed to him by the Secretary of State.

Natives in the Transvaal.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the draft Local Government Bill of the Transvaal; whether the Bill restores town regulations which were in vogue under the Kruger *regime*, forbidding any coloured persons, irrespective of race, to use the footpaths, and excluding natives and Asiatics from the tramcars; and, if so, will he say if he proposes to take any action in the matter.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State has seen the Bill referred to by my hon. friend. It is not clear whether it introduces any material change in the existing arrangements for regulating the use of side walks and tramcars by natives and Asiatics, but the Governor is being requested to furnish a Report on the subject. The Bill has a suspending clause under which it will not come into operation until His Majesty's pleasure has been signified.

Transvaal Land Legislation.

*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the draft Bills to be proposed by the Transvaal Government entitled Occupation of Lands by Natives Bill and Native Tax Bill have been brought to the notice of His Majesty's Government; if so, whether he can state if the former appears to contemplate the removal of a large number of native families from the low veldt to the high veldt, the Crown lands being barred to further native occupation, while the latter Bill provides for the summary arrest, without warrant, wherever found, of all liable to poll tax reasonably suspected of failure to pay or unable to produce receipts; and whether, the Bills being such as are normally reserved under the Transvaal Constitution, friendly representations can be made in advance as to the apparent harshness of the novel provisions of the draft measures, with the view to avoiding possible difference of opinion at a later period.

COLONEL SEELY: The draft Bills referred to have not yet appeared in the Transvaal *Gazettes* received in this country, and have not been as yet transmitted by the Governor to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will, however, communicate my right hon. friend's points to the Governor for such action as he can properly take.

Dinizulu—Stoppage of Stipend.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Natal Government has yet sent a reply to the telegraphed despatch of the Colonial Secretary of State sent on 30th May in respect to the stoppage of Dinizulu's stipend without the previous assent of the Colonial Secretary; and, if so, whether he will communicate it to this House.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State has received the following answer to the last sentence of his telegram of 30th May:—"4th June, No. 3. Referring to last sentence of your telegram of 30th May, No. 1, Dinizulu's solicitors informed Government on 1st June that not their intention, at any rate, at present moment, to attempt to recover amount claimed, alleging as reason that were they to institute action now it could not be heard until October, by which client would presumably have been tried, and money claimed would not have been available for his defence. On my inquiring, for your information, whether Ministers proposed to take any action in these circumstances, Prime Minister informed me to-day that as solicitors' communication merely intimation temporarily to suspend action, Ministers will wait any further move on part of Dinizulu's advisers.—NATHAN." In a later telegram, however, the Governor reports that if Dinizulu's solicitors desire the question of his salary to be decided, the matter can be dealt with by the Supreme Court during the current month. The Secretary of State has answered that he presumes Dinizulu's solicitors are aware of this.

MR. FLYNN: In the event of the Supreme Court deciding against Dinizulu on a technical ground, will the Colonial Secretary adhere to his decision that the Natal Government are bound by an honourable obligation to pay it?

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State will not recede from the telegram he sent.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Is it not a fact that there is an honourable undertaking on the part of His Majesty's Government that Dinizulu's salary should be paid, and in these circumstances will not the Government assert its own dignity and insist on the money being paid?

COLONEL SEELY: It would be inadvisable for me to make a statement now, because the Natal Parliament meets to-morrow, and under these circumstances it would be well for us to wait and see what is said on this matter. I can, however, inform the House that His Majesty's Government has every reason to expect that when that Parliament meets the Natal Government will show every indication of a desire that should Dinizulu be committed for trial the fullest opportunity will be given for a full and just trial of that chief.

MR. FLYNN: Will the Colonial Secretary undertake that the strong feeling of this House regarding this man's case shall be communicated to the Natal Government?

COLONEL SEELY: I think, Mr. Speaker, that there can be no doubt that the fullest information to that effect has already been conveyed by Question and Answer.

Dinizulu's Interpreter.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any official information from Natal showing that a magistrate at Pietermaritzburg has refused Miss Colenso permission to accompany Dinizulu's legal adviser as his interpreter in his interviews with the imprisoned chief; if so, will he state upon what grounds the magistrate based his decision; and whether the Natal Government has taken any, and, if so, what, steps to protect Dinizulu in the exercise of his right to select his own interpreter, having regard to the advantages attached by him to Miss Colenso's assistance.

COLONEL SEELY: The facts of the case, so far as they have been officially reported to the Secretary of State, appear to be as follows:—The governor of the gaol, acting under instructions from the Attorney-General, declined to allow Miss Colenso to accompany Mr. Renaud, Dinizulu's counsel, as interpreter on the occasions of his visits to the prisoner. Application was made to the Supreme Court for an order compelling the governor of the gaol to admit her. In dealing with this application the Chief Justice stated that the Attorney-General had no right to interfere in the matter, and that the proper authority to decide it was the magistrate, to whom an application ought to be made in order to determine who was a fit and proper person to be admitted. No official information has yet been received with regard to the subsequent proceedings; but I have seen a Press telegram in which it is stated that the magistrate decided that Miss Colenso is unsuitable to act as interpreter for Dinizulu, owing to the possibility that her attempts to influence public opinion in Great Britain may react upon public opinion in Natal and so prejudice the jury against the prisoner. A later Press telegram states that Mcapai, a former secretary to Dinizulu, has been appointed official interpreter in place of Miss Colenso. The Secretary of State expects to receive full reports of the whole of the proceedings in the ordinary course by mail.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Has the Government in its possession any record of the past of this ex-private secretary of Dinizulu, and does the Government recognise Dinizulu's right to appoint his own interpreter, or is the interpreter appointed by some authority in whom Dinizulu has no confidence?

COLONEL SEELY: I am not quite sure about that. We have inquired into the matter, but do not yet know.

Franco-Canadian Convention.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any representations have been received from the Governments of Germany and other foreign countries as to the probable effect upon their trade of the Franco-Canadian Convention; and, if so, will he state their purport to the House.

THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. J. A. PEASE, Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir E. GREY): Some inquiries have been received from foreign countries as to how the most-favoured-nation clause will be interpreted in respect to the Franco-Canadian Convention. Only one communication has been received, which is a representation as to the prejudicial effect of the Convention upon trade with any other country; it is being transmitted to the Canadian Government, and till they have received and considered it my right hon. friend can make no further statement about it.

Old-Age Pensions—Letter from Liberal Members of Parliament.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has received a letter from a large number of Liberal Members of Parliament to the effect that they view with serious concern the position of persons otherwise eligible who are now in receipt of relief; and if, in view of all the circumstances, he would consider the desirability of giving a certain period, after which, if persons have during such period neither received indoor or outdoor relief, they will become eligible.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): Yes, Sir, and I hope to be able to deal with this matter in the course of my speech.

Public Expenditure — Exchequer Issues.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state what was the total amount of the Exchequer issues in 1907–8 to meet capital expenditure, and what the amount of such issues for the Army, the Navy, the Civil Service, and the Revenue Departments, respectively; what is the estimated total for 1908–9 and the amount for each of the four categories named; and are issues on account of the Cunard Agreement treated wholly as being made for the Navy or, if not, for what other Department.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I assume that the hon. Member means by issues to meet capital expenditure the issues for expenditure under the Naval and Military Works Loan Acts and other similar Acts. The total amount of these issues in 1907–8 was £2,834,000; for 1908–9 it is estimated to be £2,785,000. For the details which make up the respective totals I beg to refer the hon. Member to pages 2 and 5 of the financial statement for 1908–9. The issues on account of the Cunard Agreement have sometimes been classed with Naval Services in special Returns, owing to the interest of the Admiralty in that Agreement; but in the ordinary forms of published account the necessity does not arise for classifying these issues as attributable to the Admiralty or any other Department, and they are not in fact so classified.

Guardians and Old-age Pensions Committee.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the interests involved in the Government scheme for the payment of old-age pensions, he will agree to an amendment of Clause 8 (1) of the Government Old-Age Pensions Bill such as will ensure an adequate representation upon local pension committees of the boards of guardians of the unions and parishes comprised within the areas for which such committees are to be appointed.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No, Sir. It is desired to administer the pension scheme in such a manner as will dissociate it entirely from the methods and traditions of the Poor Law, and therefore, while by no means underrating the value of the experience accumulated by guardians in dealing with the problems which come before them—experience which in the choice of *personnel* of the Prison Committees it is hoped may be largely available—I think that any official *nexus* between the committees and boards of guardians as such, is greatly to be deprecated.

Banks and Unclaimed Valuables and Balances.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can ascertain the quantity and value of the unclaimed plate and other valuables now in possession of all the banks of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I think it would be extremely difficult to ascertain the value of these things exactly.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would not ask the banks to give notice, both to the executors of deceased estates and to the Inland Revenue authorities, when they had unclaimed balances, in order that they might be valued in probate.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I shall consider the suggestion.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to give notice that on Wednesday I shall ask leave of the House to introduce a short measure dealing in a comprehensive manner with the whole question of balances and unclaimed securities in the hands of the bankers of the United Kingdom.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that these unclaimed balances belong to the banks?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No, I do not think so.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Then why do you allow them to keep them?

Transfers of Licence Duties.

MR SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the proposal to hand over the establishment dog, gun, and game licences to the local authorities applies also to Scotland; and, if not, will he consider whether it is advisable to increase the anomalies already existing in the Inland Revenue service; and will he consider whether it would be better to bring about a uniform system of assessing and collecting taxes by trained officials with direct responsibility to the Government.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The provisions of the Finance Bill to which my hon. friend refers and which relate to the transfer to the local authorities of the collection of the licence duties apply only to England and Wales.

Transfer of the Excise to the Customs.

MR. SEARS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that, notwithstanding the opinion of the distinguished officials on which the proposals to transfer the Excise to the Board of Customs and to hand over the establishment and other licences to local authorities are based, no official in Somerset House possessing practical experience of the work of the Department concerned was consulted, and that the recognised head of the outdoor Department, whose experience would be invaluable in considering the advisability and effect of such changes, was not even aware that they were in contemplation, and is said to have made inquiries as to the facts of another Department after the Budget was introduced; will he see that in this and all kindred matters the fullest information and the best possible advice are obtained before important changes are decided upon; and will he take steps to ascertain the views of such practical officials before the Finance Bill is proceeded with.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I can only refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave in reply to the four Questions put by him on the 4th instant.

Pensioners and the Government Scheme.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the old-age pension scheme, pensioners who receive more than £26 per annum from trade incorporations and societies, to which pensions they have a right under certain conditions, and which are not therefore in any sense charities, will be excluded from the benefits of the Government's proposals.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Under the provisions of Section 2, subsection 3, of the Bill, persons whose means exceed £26 5s. a year, whatever the sources from which their income may be derived, are not eligible for pensions.

Unclaimed Balances and Estate Duty.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any estate duty was paid by the banks of the country on the £600,000 which he estimates to have been obtained by the banks from unclaimed balances; and, if not, will he explain why.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Estate duty is payable on property which passes from one owner to another owner at death, and I understand the hon. Member's Question to refer to property which has not so passed.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: May I ask why persons who come into large estates legitimately are compelled to pay duty, while bankers who get them illegitimately escape the duty?

[No Answer was returned.]

Packet Tea Weights.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to the fact that a certain tea company, which until recently retailed its teas in packets containing full weight of tea without the wrapper, is now making up its packages with the weight of the wrapper included as tea, so that in buying quarter-pound packets the purchaser loses one and a quarter ounces of tea in each pound and whether he will introduce legislation to prevent the continuance of such a method of trading.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): I understand that the company in question has altered its practice, as stated in the Question. On the wrapper of each packet there is a clear printed statement that the weight includes the wrapper. This is the practice of many other companies, and the Board of Trade, whom I have consulted, advise me that legislation is not necessary or desirable.

Motor Accidents.

Mr. G. A. HARDY (Suffolk, Stowmarket): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the increasing number of fatal accidents and terrible injuries caused to individuals by motor cars being driven at excessive speed on our country roads; and whether some more stringent methods will be adopted to obviate the present state of matters.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am already endeavouring to collect information to show the number of accidents caused by motor vehicles throughout the country, and I will take every opportunity to impress police forces with the necessity for securing a strict observance of the existing law. If my hon. friend's Question is intended to suggest an amendment of the law, that is a matter for my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board, who has already stated that he cannot promise to introduce legislation this session.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Will the right hon. Gentleman also consider the case of the bicycle, which cuts down the pedestrian who has escaped the motor car?

Mr. GLADSTONE: That is a matter for the President of the Local Government Board.

Mr. MYER (Lambeth, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman also get a Return showing the fatalities from horse vehicles, so that a comparison may be drawn?

*Mr. GLADSTONE: Those figures are available for London.

Report of the Police Commission.

Mr. WARDLE (Stockport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Departmemt whether the Report of the Police Commission is now ready, and when it will be laid upon the Table of the House.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am informed by the Royal Commission that their Report will probably be ready for submission to the King in the course of this week.

Meals in Licensed Houses.

Earl of RONALDSHAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the total number of complaints received by Quarter Sessions during the last two years from persons who asked for a meal at licensed premises and who were unable to obtain the same.

Mr. GLADSTONE: If the noble Lord refers only to complaints made to Quarter Sessions, his question appears to relate to indictments of inn-keepers for breach of their common law obligations to supply reasonable refreshment to man and beast. Such cases are very rare, but I have no information to show their number.

Frankfurt Conference—First Aid to the Wounded.

Earl of RONALDSHAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can promise that a full Report in English shall be laid before the House of the proceedings of the first International Conference on First Aid to the Wounded and Injured recently held at Frankfurt.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I will bear this Question in mind, but I cannot promise at present that a Report will be laid before the House.

Classification of Licensed Premises.

Earl of RONALDSHAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can grant a Return showing the number of licensed premises which have only a bar for the sale of liquors, and those which have a restaurant or dining-room, and those which have both.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am afraid that I cannot direct the compilation of such a Return. It would mean no less than a separate detailed report upon each of the 95,000 on-licensed premises.

Danish and New Zealand Trade with Great Britain.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the respective amounts of exports and imports between Great Britain and Denmark and between Great Britain and New Zealand for the latest year available.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I will have the figures for 1907 printed in the Votes.

The figures are as follows—

Statement of the value of the exports from the United Kingdom consigned to, and the imports into the United Kingdom consigned from, Denmark and New Zealand in the year 1907.

——	Denmark.	New Zealand.
	£	£
Exports of the produce and manufactures of the United Kingdom - - - - - .	5,530,286	8,700,941
Re-exports of Foreign and Colonial merchandise from the United Kingdom - - - -	593,753	740,967
Total exports from the United Kingdom - -	6,124,039	9,441,908
Imports into the United Kingdom - - -	18,001,401	17,787,809

French Assay and Marking.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has received through the Foreign Office a request from the French Government that articles of gold and silver plate marked in France should be exempt from British assay and marking when offered for sale in this country; and what action he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. CHURCHILL: The reply to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative. I am in communication on the subject with the principal sections of the trade interested, and no action will be decided on until their views are fully known.

Access to the Thames at Whitchurch.

MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give any further particulars of the erection of a wall in the bed of the River Thames at Whitchurch; whether he is aware that this wall was erected opposite a road which formerly ran alongside of the river from the village to the lock; that the space between the new wall and the road was filled in by the person who had erected the wall and enclosed with a fence; and that the road has thus been entirely shut off from the river, so that the only means of access from the village to the river has been closed; whether he is aware that the attention of the Conservators was drawn to the matter by the parish council; whether the consent of the Conservators was ever obtained to the erection of the wall; and whether he will explain in what way the Board satisfied themselves that they had no power to intervene.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am informed by the Thames Conservancy that the wall on the Oxfordshire side of the mill stream at Whitchurch was constructed in 1895 by the then owner of the mill upon his own property, and that the fence which excluded the public from the mill stream was on the land beyond the Conservancy jurisdiction. The attention of the Conservancy was called to the matter by their officers, and subsequently the Whitchurch Parish Council requested the Conservancy to withhold their consent to the work until certain facilities which were claimed as public rights were restored. The Conservancy Board found on investigation that the work which had been carried out did not interfere with the navigation and that their consent was not necessary.

MR. MORRELL inquired if the Thames Conservancy did not at the request of the parish council refuse their assent to the building of the wall, and afterwards called on the person who built it to remove it, but were unable to enforce their demand because they had no funds to do so?

MR. CHURCHILL asked for notice.

*MR. BYLES: Is the upshot that the public is robbed?

Audit under the Electric Lighting Acts.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if the Board of Trade have decided in future to accept the audit of electric lighting companies' own auditors as sufficient for the purposes of a public audit under the Electric Lighting Acts; and, if so, upon what grounds such decision has been made.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir; there is, I think, some misapprehension as to the action taken by the Board of Trade in regard to the audit of the accounts of electric lighting companies. The Board continue to carry out their statutory duty of appointing official auditors, who are specially instructed to direct their attention to the protection of the interests of the consumers and of the possible purchasing authority, and who are responsible for this audit to the Board of Trade. The official auditors appointed by the Board to audit the accounts of electric lighting companies for the year 1907 are professional accountants who are, in a good many cases, but by no means in all, identical with the shareholders auditors. This is an arrangement which I am informed avoids a certain amount of unnecessary duplication of work, though it carries with it some possible disadvantages. It has not been adopted in any case in which the local authority is empowered to purchase the undertaking at a price dependent on the amount of capital expenditure, and I will watch the progress of the arrangement carefully in case it should be necessary to make any change.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in one case where the public auditors were one with the company's auditors items which were of ordinary current expenditure were set down to capital?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am not aware of that fact.

Proposed Railway Combine.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been directed to the authorised announcement that the Great Northern, Great Central, and Great Eastern Railway Companies have decided to seek Parliamentary powers with a view to combination; if he has considered, in the public interest, the effects of the creation of a privately-owned monopoly of such magnitude; and if he can state what attitude the Board of Trade intend to take in the matter.

MR. CHURCHILL: My attention has been called to statements of the nature referred to, but until details of the proposals are known it is impossible to forecast what action may seem desirable.

Steel Combine.

MR. MYER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that a steel combine, with a capital of £75,000,000, has been successfully executed, and that the leading firms of this country and of Germany, Russia, and the United States are allied in this combination, the object of which is to control the international export trade; and whether, in the interests of the trade of this country, the Government will expiscate a method to render such combinations illegal.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have seen reports in the Press of the nature referred to, but I have no information which would enable me to confirm them. It is not proposed to introduce legislation making combinations of capital illegal.

Colonial Trade Commissioners.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has yet appointed Trade Commissioners in the self-governing Colonies, in pursuance of the policy announced byhis predecessor at the Imperial Conference, 1907; and whether it will be a part of their duties to make detailed annual Reports on the course of trade between the United Kingdom and the Colonies similar to those which are now made by the Consular representatives of the United States, Germany, and other foreign countries, who are stationed in the various oversea Dominions of the British Empire.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am now considering the qualifications of suitable candidates for the posts of Trade Commissioners in the self-governing Dominions, and propose to make some appointments at an early date. The preparation of annual and other Reports on the conditions and prospects of the trade of the Colonies, with particular reference to trade with the United Kingdom and other parts of the Empire, will be included among the duties of the Commissioners.

Westerhope School Site.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what was taken as the annual value per acre for rating purposes at the time of the purchase of the site between Westerhope and North Walbottle, which was recently purchased for a school by the Northumberland County Council from the Duke of Northumberland at a price of about £749 per acre.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): I am informed that the site of the school was part of a farm of 164 acres, the gross estimated rental of which was £86 and the rateable value £81 10s.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what proportion was applicable to the site in question?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I cannot.

West Ham Scandals.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board how many guardians and officers have been dismissed in consequence of the inquiries he has instituted into the affairs of the West Ham Union.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I understand that five guardians and thirty-one officers of the West Ham Union have been dismissed or have had to resign or to cease to hold office since the beginning of 1906. The termination of office in the case of twenty of these persons, including the five guardians, was directly connected with the inquiries referred to in the Question.

*MR. REES: And how many of these are in prison?

MR. JOHN BURNS said that out of the thirty-six cases he had mentioned nine were in prison—five guardians and four officers—and apart from the inquiry there had been four other cases of imprisonment.

*MR. REES: Has the right hon. Gentleman now given the full results of the inquiry?

MR. JOHN BURNS: No, I cannot at this moment. It is not yet completed.

Press Gallery Accommodation.

MR. WARDLE: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if his attention has been called to complaints made by the Press representatives in the Gallery of the want of accommodation provided for them in the precincts of the House when not actually engaged in the work of reporting; and whether he will make inquiries with a view to better accommodation being provided.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): I have considerably enlarged and improved the accommodation provided for the Press and have received expressions of their thanks for doing so. I am sorry to say that I cannot find any further space which could be devoted to their use.

New Forest Fires.

SIR ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can now state the result of his recent personal inspection and inquiry into the extensive burnings in the New Forest carried out by the Crown authorities; and, if so, what steps have been taken to allay the feeling of indignation on the part of the inhabitants, and also of the general public, who resent the injury done to their beautiful national park; and what instructions have been issued to prevent any such similar occurrence in the future.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): As my hon. friend is aware, I visited the New Forest, in company with the Commissioner of Woods, the deputy-surveyor, two gentlemen residents in the Forest, and himself. A distance of about eighty miles was covered during this inspection of the burnings. I have informed the Commissioner of Woods, responsible for the Forest that, while I generally approved the instructions issued by the deputy-surveyor for the burning of roadside strips in order to prevent accidental fires which destroyed, yearly, beautiful and extensive portions of the woodlands, I was of opinion that the execution of such orders by the surveyor's subordinates had not always been carried out with the necessary regard for the sentiments of householders by the roadside. I would remind my hon. friend that in addition to the accidental burnings above referred to, incendiaries have set light deliberately to gorse and heather growing by the roadside, and thus destroyed very large areas of valuable and beautiful timber in some of the most beautiful portions of the Forest. I am in hopes that this incendiarism may be checked, if not entirely prevented, by the destruction of the roadside gorse and heather, which afforded fuel for this deliberate firing.

I have no doubt whatever that in a comparatively short time it will be almost impossible to distinguish the roadside burnings from the adjoining heath.

SIR ROBERT HOBART: Does the hon. Gentleman thoroughly appreciate the feeling of indignation aroused in the New Forest on this subject?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I unfortunately discovered that a great many burnings were actually being done by residents in the Forest with most deliberately and ingeniously contrived machines for setting whole districts on fire. I noticed in the paper only this morning, an account of a most destructive fire on Wandsworth Common.

MR. FORSTER (Kent, Sevenoaks): When it is necessary to burn parts of the Forest, cannot tracts be chosen further removed from the roadside?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I entirely sympathise with the hon. Gentleman in his feeling. May I point out that these strips which have been burnt have been by the roadside in order to prevent the hinterland of the Forest from being burnt, and that the burning of that part of the Forest which has been burnt is due to accidental or deliberate burnings by passers-by?

Bell Rock Fishery.

MR. ROBERT HARCOURT (Montrose Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is the view of His Majesty's Government that there is any international difficulty in prohibiting trawling within three miles of the Bell Rock; and, if not, whether the Fishery Board will take steps to enforce such prohibition.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: At the same time, may I ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will take steps to enforce the three-mile limit prohibition provided by the Herring Fishery (Scotland) Act, to trawling within that distance of the Bell Rock.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I have consulted the Foreign Office in regard to this Question, and that put by the hon. Member for the St. Andrews Burghs. It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government, at all events, for the present, to assert any claim to exclusive fishery within a three-mile limit of the Bell Rock.

Firth of Forth Fisheries—The Circle Trawl.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can afford any hope of limiting or restricting the use of the circle trawl in the upper reaches of the Firth of Forth, the mesh of which is but a quarter of an inch or thereabouts, by which quantities of immature herrings have been destroyed and sold as manure, to the detriment of the fishing industries on the coasts of Fife, Midlothian, East Lothian and elsewhere.

MR. SINCLAIR: I may refer the hon. Member to my answer to his Question on 11th May, and may add that the investigation which will be made into this matter will take place at a date prior to the general resumption of this class of fishing.

Irish Supplies for the Post Office.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will arrange that some postal official in Ireland will be appointed to give Irish manufacturers particulars of the Post Office requirements for stores; and whether he will arrange to open a sample office in Dublin where samples may be tested in the case of intending contractors.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): All particulars can be obtained from the officer in charge of the stores branch, at Aldborough House, Dublin. It would not be practicable to exhibit samples of all classes of stores, but, if samples were asked for in any particular case every endeavour would be made to supply them.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the cause of the marked decline in expenditure on Post Office stores in

Pensions Bill and the Closure.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) said he understood that the Prime Minister proposed to put down on Wednesday next a Motion closuring the discussion on the remaining stages of the Old-Age Pensions Bill. He would ask him whether, for his own information, and certainly for the information of the rest of the House, he would not consider the propriety of waiting until he saw what Amendments were put down on the Paper, not merely because that was the usual course, but because it was almost impossible to discuss the propriety of any particular "gag" Resolution until they saw the questions which were being raised and the time that ought to be allocated between them.

Mr. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.) said the point raised by the right hon. Gentleman was one which had, of course, been very carefully considered by the Government before the announcement on the subject was made. On the whole, they had come to the conclusion that it was better in the matter not to follow the practice which had prevailed in recent years of allowing the Committee stage of a Bill to be started and a good deal of time to be wasted on important matters, and then to interpose the procedure for Closure. It was far better, in the opinion of the Government, to form such an estimate as they could in advance of the comparative importance of the different parts of the Bill, and to allocate to those parts an amount of time reasonably proportionate to their comparative difficulty and their intrinsic importance.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he was afraid the right hon. Gentleman had not appreciated the nature of his Question. All he asked was that the right hon. Gentleman should see the Amendments on the Paper which were to be moved in Committee before the "gag" Resolution was moved.

Mr. ASQUITH said he did not know whether he ought to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on having discovered a new term applied to Parliamentary procedure, which he did not remember to have heard him use in the late Parliament—that of the "gag Resolution." He thought he had answered his Question. It was not necessary to wait for the Amendments, because they knew perfectly well what were the main points of criticism.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Does not the right hon. Gentleman consider that the House should have some voice in saying what it desires to discuss?

Mr. ASQUITH said the House would have a complete and unfettered voice in the matter, in discussing the Resolution to be submitted on Wednesday.

Lord R. CECIL: How?

[No Answer was returned.]

PREVENTION OF CRIME [EXPENSES.]

A Committee to consider of authorising the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of Expenses incurred under any Act of the present session to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for other purposes incidental thereto (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow. — (*Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*)

NEW BILL.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC (REGULATION OF SPEED) BILL.

"To secure the safety of pedestrians, especially children, in public thoroughfares in populous places," presented by Mr. Bertram Straus; supported by Mr. Dickinson, Sir William Collins, Mr. Steadman, Dr. Cooper, Mr. Crooks, Sir Andrew Torrance, Sir John Brunner, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Abel Smith, Mr. George Hardy, and Mr. William Pearce; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 263.]

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): I do not propose to enter into an explanation of the provisions of this Bill. The Bill has been before the House for some time, it has been thoroughly criticised, both in the Press and on the platform, and hon. Members have been able to form an opinion one way or the other with regard to its general character. I propose rather this afternoon to take *seriatim* the main criticisms which have been levelled at the provisions of the measure. But before I come to consider these criticisms in detail I should like to make one or two preliminary observations. The first is this, that the scheme is necessarily an incomplete one. We have never professed that it was complete and dealt with the whole problem; we wished it to be treated as an incomplete one, and to be considered as such. It is purely the first step, and I may even say it is necessarily an experiment. The second observation I should like to make is this, that those who have criticised most severely the disqualifications which we have introduced into the Bill are those who are opposed to the principle of the payment of old-age pensions at the expense of the State at all. Therefore I should invite hon. Members to consider very cautiously those criticisms when they recollect the quarter from which in the main they have come. The first general criticism is that this is a non-contributory scheme. I am not sure that that is not the effect of the Amendments of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone and my hon. friend the Member for Preston—these two anarchist leaders. I demur altogether to the division of the schemes into contributory and non-contributory. So long as you have taxes imposed upon commodities which are consumed practically by every family in the country there is no such thing as a non-contributory scheme. You tax tea and coffee, sugar, beer and tobacco, and you get a contribution from practically every family in the land one way or another. So, therefore, when a scheme is financed out of public funds it is as much a contributory scheme as a scheme which is financed directly by means of contributions arranged on the German or any other basis. A workman who has contributed health and strength, vigour and skill, to the creation of the wealth by which taxation is borne has made his contribution already to the fund which is to give him a pension when he is no longer fit to create that wealth. Therefore, I object altogether to the general division of these schemes into contributory and non-contributory schemes. There is, however, a class of scheme which is known as a contributory one. There is the German scheme, in which the workmen pay into a fund. It is rather a remarkable fact that most social reformers who have taken up this question have at first favoured contributory schemes, but a closer examination has almost invariably led them to abandon them on the ground that they are unequal in their treatment of the working classes, cumbersome, and very expensive, and in a country like ours hopelessly impracticable. I would refer to the experience of the statesman who on the whole has done more to popularise the question of old-age pensions in this country than anyone else—I mean the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. He took up this question a good many years ago, and advocated it on public platforms. No doubt he urged it upon his party, for he got Committees appointed to examine the subject. His first idea was a contributory scheme, but he afterwards abandoned it, having come to the conclusion that it was quite impracticable. He got a Committee appointed, I think by the 1892 Government, for the examination of his plans, and he first of all summoned about sixty or seventy Members of this House to consider and formulate a plan of a contributory character. Gradually he gave up that position and in the course of the debates in this House he formally abandoned his adhesion to a contributory scheme. I do not think it is any secret that the scheme adopted by the Committee presided over by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, of which I had the privilege of being a member, was in substance the scheme which was pressed upon the Members by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. By that time he had given up finally, I think, any notion of a contributory scheme. He had come to the conclusion that it was quite impracticable for a variety of reasons in this country. We sifted all the schemes which were brought before us, and I do not believe there was a scheme not submitted to us. We examined witnesses who gave evidence with regard to plans which had been adopted in other countries, and witnesses with regard to small schemes of old-age pensions which had been established in England more especially, and after examining all these schemes very carefully we came with practical unanimity to the conclusion that we could not recommend a contributory scheme, and in its main outlines the scheme recommended by the right hon. Gentleman's Committee is the one which the Government has followed on the present occasion. I should like to point out another circumstance. There has been a change in the character of the schemes submitted by Members or by groups of Members of this House and since 1899 there has become noticeable a tendency to substitute for contributory schemes schemes of a non-contributory character. There is the hon. Member for Worcestershire, who had a scheme which was purely non-contributory, and he, I believe, had the support of the vast majority of Members on his own side of the House when that Bill came before us on two or three occasions in the last Parliament. Therefore, practically all parties in this House, with two or three exceptions, have abandoned almost finally the contributory idea and have decided that the only plan which could be carried out successfully in this country is a non-contributory one. That is a very important consideration, and must be borne in mind by those who criticise the Government because we have not put forward a contributory plan. A good deal is made in the Press of this, and there seems to be a revival of the contributory idea. It follows practically the same course that it followed in this House. Those who approach the question of old-age pensions for the first time are rather taken with the contributory idea, and, although I will not say the Press approach the question for the first time, yet they have now seriously approached it as a practical proposal for the first time, and they are affected by the contributory plan exactly in the same way as this House was. It appeals to all at first. But the more they consider the matter the more will they realise the difficulties and the unfairness of such a scheme, and ultimately they will come to the same conclusion that all parties in this House seem to have come to for the last fifteen or twenty years. Let me give now two or three considerations why, in my judgment, a contributory scheme is impossible in this country. In the first place, it would practically exclude women from its benefits. Out of the millions of members of friendly societies there is but a small proportion, comparatively, of women. Another consideration is that the vast majority are not earning anything and cannot pay their contributions. The second reason is that the majority of working men are unable to deflect from their weekly earnings a sufficient sum of money to make adequate provision for old age in addition to that which they are now making for sickness, infirmity, and unemployment. I do not know what the average weekly wage in this country is; we have not had a wages census since 1886. I hope the Board of Trade will soon be able to publish the result of the wages census initiated some months ago, but I do not suppose we shall have the Returns in time for our debates on this Bill. The average weekly wage in 1886 was 24s. 9d., and 57 per cent. of the working classes in this country were then earning 25s. or less. It is quite clear, therefore, that out of such wages they cannot make provision for sickness, for all the accidents and expenses of life, and also set aside a sufficient sum to provide a competence for old age as well. Take the agricultural labourer, with his 15s. or 16s. a week. How can he set aside 4d. a week for a period of forty years, in addition to what he has to set aside already for the purpose of sickness or infirmity? He must pay his subscriptions to the friendly societies steadily and regularly. I find that some of the friendly societies which have superannuation benefits demand that if you fail in your subscriptions you either make it up afterwards, sometimes with interest, or you forfeit your benefit altogether. Now it is obviously impossible that that could be done with the great majority of workmen. The friendly societies of this country have a membership of about 12,000,000. So far from the number being over 12,000,000 it would very likely be under, because a good many members of trade unions are also members of benefit societies. It is very gratifying that such a large number of workmen should have the prudence, foresight, and restraint to enable them to set aside out of earnings money which they might have spent on necessaries or the comforts of the moment. I point that out for this reason, that the House may depend upon it that, if it were within the compass of the means of the working classes to make provision for old age, the fact that they had provided for sickness, that a good many have provided against unemployment and accidents of that kind, would in itself be a proof that they would have provided superannuation for old age if they could have done it. And I would point out the fact that most of the great friendly societies in this country have discovered that a superannuation scheme is practically a failure—that they cannot get a sufficient number of subscribers to make it a substantial part of their great scheme. The noble lord the Member for Marylebone, I see, rather challenges that statement; but I wonder whether he has seen the remarkable letter in the *Spectator* from a past grand master of a lodge of Oddfellows? He points out that they have failed to make provision of from 1s. 4d. to 3s. 4d. a week for aged persons, and I think he says the working classes could not afford to sustain a contribution of this kind through life in addition to the other drain on their resources. Besides that, I do not think the State has a right to invite the workman earning from 15s. to 20s. or 25s. a week to make the sacrifice which is necessary—the sacrifice, really, of some of the absolute necessaries of life as far as he and his children are concerned, in order to make provision for old age, but that the State itself ought to make it. So much with regard to the non-contributory question. I am dealing first with criticisms which, even if they were substantiated, would not have the effect of increasing the cost of the scheme. The second criticism of that character is that which has been directed against the fixed income limit. It has been suggested that it would be far more equitable to have a sliding scale. The Prime Minister, when he gave an outline of the scheme in his Budget statement, made it perfectly clear that the Government had no very emphatic view on this question; that it was purely a balance of considerations, and that the balance, in his mind, very slightly tended in the direction of a fixed income limit. There is a good deal to be said on both sides, and I am quite prepared to give due weight to the consideration in favour of a sliding scale. It does seem to be rather unfair that a man who is earning 7s. should be better treated by the State than the man who is earning 12s. The man who earns 7s. gets a pension; the man who earns 12s. gets nothing. On the face of it, that appears to be inequitable. If a sliding scale were established, there is one consideration which ought to weigh with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whoever he may be, and that is that I do not think there will be the same inducement to reduce the income in order to claim the benefits of the scheme. I am not suggesting fraud, but I think that can be done in many ways without fraud. I can quite imagine a case where a liberal employer is giving a pension of 11s. or 12s. a week to one of his old workmen. If he gave him only 10s. the workman would be better off by 3s., and, therefore, it would be an inducement to the employer, not to save his own pocket, but to benefit his workman, to reduce the pension he was giving him. These are considerations which I should like the House to weigh very carefully, but the Government have an open mind on this question. Personally, I think there is a good deal to be said for a sliding scale. It is working very well in New Zealand. I have never heard any criticism against its operation there, and, if the House is of that opinion, they will find the Government will not resist that very strenuously. But I have got one word of warning to my hon. friends below the gangway. I do not mind a sliding scale so long as it does not increase substantially the charges upon the Exchequer, and I think it would be possible to suggest a sliding scale which will neither diminish nor increase the charges but which would be fair to all parties. But if the sliding scale takes as a minimum what we have adopted as a maximum, the result would be that we would be committing ourselves to an absolutely indefinite figure. There have been estimates based on an income of 10s.; there have been no estimates based on 15s.; and, therefore, it would be a great leap in the dark if the range were to extend from 10s. to 15s. That is all I have got to say about the sliding scale. I come to the criticisms and objections which, if they are maintained, will have the effect of increasing the charges on the Exchequer, and very substantially increasing them. But before I consider them in detail, I should like to make a few general observations as to the cost of the scheme. Hon. Members will find all the material for calculating its cost in the Budget statement of the Prime Minister. The number of persons over seventy is 1,262,632, and, obviously, the cost of the scheme will depend upon the deductions and whether those deductions will work out up to the éstimate formed beforehand. Those deductions are in respect of crime and aliens who are not naturalised. Then there is the thrift and industry test, which will not effect a very substantial diminution in the cost. The two tests that will make a very considerable inroad upon the number of persons over seventy who can claim 10s. are, first, the persons with a 10s. limit of income, and, secondly, the pauper test. Making all necessary deductions in respect of all these tests, the Prime Minister has already told the House that the net pensionables—the number of people who can pass all these tests and claim a pension—aggregate 572,000. If 572,000 is multiplied by 13, it will be found to work out, in round figures, at £7,500,000. There is a deduction in respect of married couples, but the saving on that heading would practically be neutralised by the cost of administration, which would probably be £250,000, while the saving on couples would not be more than £300,000. That is the estimate, but it is purely an estimate. The cost of the scheme will, eventually, if these figures work out, be £7,500,000. We may be asked why did we say the cost was £6,000,000? My right hon. friend said the charge at first would be £6,000,000, but that, eventually, it would develop and extend. The reason why we came to the conclusion that at first the charge would not be more than £6,000,000 was this. Everything is in the realm of conjecture when you are dealing with human elements of this kind, but we find that in New Zealand and in Denmark even those who were entitled to claim a pension were at first a little shy and reserved about it—so much so that in New Zealand there were only 7,000 claimants the first year. The second year they ran up to 11,000, an increase practically of about 60 per cent. in the second, or, to be more accurate, in the third year. A number of persons who can claim a pension will be anxious to see how it works, what the effect of it will be, what the *status* of the pensioner is, how the drawing of a pension is regarded by the public opinion of the class they belong to. I think that must have a very great effect upon the applications for the first year. I have no doubt that in the course of two or three years, it may be in less, these pensions will become very popular. They will be regarded as an honourable recognition of services rendered to the State, and in course of time, perhaps a very short time, practically all the persons who can claim pensions will put in their claims and press them. They pressed them so hard in New Zealand that they had in the course of two years rather to limit than to extend the operation of their Acts. The second consideration which I think will affect the numbers for the first year or two is the pauper disqualification test. The full effect of that will be felt in the first year, but gradually it will disappear. It is a vanishing disqualification, and I want the House to remember that. It disqualifies those who from the 1st January onward are in receipt of relief. But the moment this pension is established, what will happen? There are three or four persons, at any rate, whose business it will be to see that the class of persons who now get Poor Law relief will in future stand out for a State pension. In the case of every man about seventy years of age who applies for Poor Law relief, they will induce him to wait if he is not seventy, and after seventy they will refer him to the Excise officer, and it will be their business in the interest of the rates to bring all the pressure in their power, and it is very considerable, rather to push the applicants for Poor Law relief into the category of pensioners. There is the applicant himself, who will naturally prefer 5s. a week as a State pensioner to 3s. a week as a pauper. Then there are the relatives, and it will be to their interest to get 5s., because £13 a year given in consideration of maintaining an aged person is a gigantic addition to the annual income of a labourer. Therefore, you have the guardians, the aged persons themselves, their relatives, and all those people who are engaged in charitable work, clergymen, and others, in a conspiracy to reduce the number of possible paupers and to increase the number of possible State pensioners. That is why we have come to the conclusion that although at first the scheme may not cost more than £6,000,000, it may in the course of a year or two cost considerably more, and the figure I have given is by no means an under-estimate. I am not so sure that the 10s. limit is incapable of modification, but I shall not dwell upon that. I can quite understand that after the Bill comes into operation there are many old persons who are now earning 11s. by hard work who will, I will not say at once, throw up their jobs and draw their pension, but it may limit the sphere of their toil and cause them to give it up a little earlier than they otherwise would. An hon. friend has told me of a superannuation scheme in Wales where a good many men prefer drawing from 5s. a week of superannuation to earning their 10s., 12s. or 14s. by hard work in the quarry. I can quite understand it; they are not working merely for the sake of the 12s., but because they are obliged to do so in order to earn their daily bread, and if a pension is provided even to the limited extent of 5s., many of them will think the time has come when they have earned rest from their labour. That is why I should like to warn the House that these figures are elastic. Well, that is the experience of every country. Take New Zealand, and Denmark more especially; I am not quite sure about Germany. I do not know what the German estimate was, but I know that with regard to almost every country which has embarked on this experiment in no case has it gone beyond the resources of the State. I want the House to realise that at the present moment, even if the Bill passes without a single alteration, what the commitment of the Treasury is. It is a possible commitment of seven and a half millions, and the consideration that I wish to put to the House is that, at any rate, we should wait until we see how the thing works before we enlarge and widen the sphere of operation of so liberal a scheme. Another thing I should like to say is that it is much the most liberal scheme which has ever been suggested by any responsible authority in this House. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon's Committee proposed an age-limit of sixty-five, and that half the expense was to come out of the rates, and the sum of money to come out of the Exchequer was considerably less than the sum we are undertaking to provide now under this scheme. Take the pauper limit. This disqualification affects a smaller number of men than has ever been suggested to the House. Other schemes, that of the Member for Wimbledon, the scheme of the Member for Worcester and his colleagues, invariably provided that every person in receipt of Poor Law relief for twenty years before the application should be excluded. Our estimate of the number of those excluded by our disqualification is something between 278,000 to 280,000 persons. The estimate of the Hamilton Committee of the number of persons to be excluded under the pauper test of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon, and of hon. Members sitting behind him, was over 400,000, so that this is far and away the most liberal scheme that has ever been submitted to this House in that respect. It is a much more liberal scheme than any that has been submitted by any old country. The Colonies, it is true, have much more liberal schemes, but I think I am entitled to point this out in regard to the Colonies, that they are not in the same position as we are; they have not a great naval and military expenditure; the Navy that defends their shores is maintained by us, and therefore they can afford it. If we could have saved our naval and military expenditure, or even one-half of it—[AN HON. MEMBER: "Why not?"]—then I can assure the House that this is not the scheme which we would have submitted, and that is equally true of any old-established country. They have enormous expenditure for naval and military purposes, and therefore they cannot afford what a new country like Australia or New Zealand can undertake. Another thing is that their local finance is totally different. They have great land grants to provide sites, which we buy with an enormous amount of money; and not only that, but the land grant subsidises local rates instead of being a burden on them. They are in a much better position financially to embark on liberal schemes, which we could not look at for the time being. But if you take countries like Germany, Belgium, Denmark and France, and examine the best of the schemes submitted in any or every one of these countries, this is infinitely more liberal than anything that has been brought before the legislature of any land. Germany has a prosperous scheme for old-age, for infirmity, for sickness, and for unemployment. It costs £2,500,000 in the aggregate to the State, and the State subscription to the old-age pension over seventy is 1s. a week. In this country we are embarking in a scheme which begins at £6,000,000, which climbs up in the direction of £7,000,000. I want the House of Commons or any Member of the House, who begins to scrutinise our plan and to object to the disqualifications that limit the expenditure, to remember that no great country has ever embarked on a bolder experiment than we are submitting to the House at the present moment. I now come to examine in detail some disqualifications and the objections raised to them. The first is the age limit. Hon. Members have suggested that we ought to reduce the limit from seventy to sixty-five. Of course, if we followed the plan which was adopted not merely by the right hon. Member for Wimbledon and several other Members on the other side, and had put half the charge on the local rates, we could have done it, but that is not quite consistent with the attitude taken up on this side of the House, and on the other side of the House also, that the charges for the local rates are much too high at the present time. I was a party to that scheme, but I do not think the right hon. Gentleman himself would now get up and suggest that a part of the cost should fall upon the local rates. That shows that we are not in a position to consider the only scheme which up to the present has been considered feasible with the view of reducing the age limit to sixty-five. The expenditure would be too great to begin with, and in my own judgment I do not think that is the best way of dealing with the period between sixty-five and seventy. I am not sure that the German method is not better there. It deals with infirmity rather than with age. That is the test under seventy. I can well understand a man of seventy saying, "I am willing to retire, I have earned my pension." There are many men of sixty-five, sixty-six, and sixty-seven who are much more effective and vigorous, and capable of doing good work, than many men of fifty-seven. I think when we come to deal, as I hope we will in the near future, with the problem of infirmity that will be the time to consider the question of the broken down old man of sixty-seven and sixty-eight who is left to charity. But we are now simply providing old-age pensions, and I think they ought to begin at seventy—the old-age pension as such—that is my answer to the proposal to reduce the limit from seventy to sixty-five. It is because of the fact that it costs more, that is my answer for the moment. I would rather not at the moment contemplate any expenditure beyond the £7,500,000. I come now to the second disqualification, or rather to the second proposal in the Bill, which has been criticised very severely. I refer to the treatment accorded to married couples, or to those living together, married or unmarried, such as brothers and sisters. We have been very severely attacked for this proposal. One would really imagine that such a proposal had never been put forward before. I have been through most of the schemes submitted to the House by hon. Members on either side, and I find that almost every plan proposes to deal with couples on this basis. The right hon. Member for Wimbledon's Committee had this proposal before them—namely, that you should have a fixed figure for the aged person, but that there should be an abatement in respect of couples.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): In the case of two sisters living together?

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: We do not want to punish marriage, and this might conceivably be the effect if you confined it only to married couples. Does the hon. Member mean to suggest that you should give 7s. 6d. to a married couple and 10s. to an unmarried couple?

MR. GOULDING: Provide a sliding scale.

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Provide a sliding scale of what? I do not want to discuss that. The reason that has prompted, not merely the Government, but every Committee that has considered this question, and every group of Members who have ever formulated a scheme, is the suggestion made that they would have nothing to do with the question of married or single. It is purely a question of household economy. You have this scheme in Denmark, and in Australia; and it has been proposed practically by every scheme which has been submitted to the House, with, perhaps, the exception of my hon. friend behind me. Every plan submitted in the form of a Bill or proposed by a Committee has involved an abatement in respect of couples living together. I repudiate, therefore, the kind of language that has been used about this and two or three other disqualifications. One might imagine that we were engaged as a Government in a nefarious attempt by crafty, harsh, and even immoral means to rob hundreds of thousands of old people of the honourable provision made for them by Tory Administrations in the past, and that this was the sole object of the Government Bill. No stranger coming to this country and following the controversy could imagine that we were trying for the first time to realise a scheme which men of all parties had been trying for the last twelve years to initiate. Although hon. Members opposite had been ten years in power, with an opportunity of dealing with the question, it is only now that we are attempting for the first time, in our third year of office, to provide about £7,000,000 of money. [Several OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You are not providing £7,000,000.] That is purely a quibble and hon. Members opposite will find that out. When a Government undertakes a task of this kind is it really supposed that we do not know absolutely what provision we have to make. Surely hon. Members must have a poor opinion of the present Government—and I know they have—but at the same time they cannot imagine any sane body of Britishers undertaking a task of this kind without knowing, and knowing pretty clearly, where they are going. I assure the House that we do know. Very well, we are making this provision, I repeat, for the first time; and, therefore, I must protest against the language which has been addressed to us and the criticisms which have been levelled against us in respect of these disqualifications. At any rate, in spite of these disqualifications, we are finding for the first time a provision for very nearly 680,000 aged persons who have nothing but pauperism in front of them. I ask the House to remember this when we come to consider questions like the abatement on income and married couples. I have pointed out that every proposal practically up to the present time contained this particular abatement, and that it is in practical operation in one or two of the Australian Colonies and in Denmark. The reason is, of course, that we want our dole to go as far as it possibly will, not merely in order to save the taxpayer, but really because it is purely a beginning. Every penny that we spend which is not necessary for the establishment of the scheme, and for conferring on aged people its full benefit, is money which is *pro tanto* taken away from the development of the scheme in future. Therefore, we have to consider every penny from that point of view. It would cost £300,000 now, a very considerable sum; but the cumulative effect would be also very considerable and would have a curtailing effect on any future plan to be presented to the country. I come now to the industry test. It is very difficult to find out what the full operation of this test will be. There has been a good deal of misapprehension as to its purpose, and I think it is largely due to the use of one or two words which were a little unfortunate in the drafting of the Bill. It is supposed from the use of the word "misbehaviour" that this implied a character test. It does not; it is an industry test, which is a very different thing. The right hon. Gentleman opposite proposed a very stringent thrift test, and I find that the Hamilton Commission went into the figures very closely and came to the conclusion that this test excluded 43,000 persons altogether. I think that this was a very high estimate. But the test in the Bill is not so severe a test as that proposed by the right hon. Gentleman. That was to a certain extent a character test, and it was certainly a thrift test. In respect to a very considerable number of workmen, the ordinary application of the word "thrift" is impossible. You cannot ask a man earning 15s. or 20s. a week, with gaps, to save money in the sense of a workman earning £3 a week. If, therefore, the thrift test were strictly enforced, it would be unfair and unjust; and therefore we dismiss the thrift test. But this is a test of a different kind. It is a test to exclude the loafer and the wastrel. I do not attach any importance to the mere wording of the clause, and if any hon. Member can suggest a better form of words, or if he thinks that the net is a little too wide, and that a good many men who it is not desired to catch, would possibly be caught by these words, we are perfectly willing to consider any form of alternative words. But I do attach very great importance to the principle that men of this category shall not be treated on the same basis as men who have given the best of their lives in honest service to the State. This is a class of man known very well in the small town and village. He shirks through life; he has never done his duty; he has managed somehow to get along without doing many days honest work in his life, and yet has escaped from applying for relief to the Poor Law. This man, I think, ought to be excluded for two reasons. One reason is applicable to the pensioners themselves. I think it is highly important that the receiver of the pension should be regarded as quite honourable, that there should be nothing in the nature of pauperisation, that the pension should be regarded as the recognition of faithful services to the State; and if every man, without distinction of conduct—if men who have never done an honest day's work in their lives, receive this pension in common with men who have really worked hard, I think that the receiver of the pension will be regarded in the same light as he who is actually known to be of that stamp which we wish ruthlessly to exclude, as they ought to be. In order, therefore, to raise the character of the gift, or, rather, the recognition of faithful service to the State, we eliminate the loafer and the wastrel from among the recipients of the bounty of the State. My second reason is this. I am thinking rather of the effect it will have on men whose sole interest in the scheme is to contribute by means of taxation to the finance of it. If men who are paying heavily for the right, see men of that kind receiving at their expense an honourable pension of £13 a year, depend upon it, although not numerous, they will be multiplied a hundredfold in the imagination of every man who has paid his taxes. He would naturally say: "I pay so much in income-tax and in a number of ways to the fund, and this is what the money goes for." I am certain the result would be that you would poison their minds against the whole proposal. It is very important that all classes of the community, not merely those who receive a pension, but also those who contribute towards it, should feel that it is fair, just, and equitable in all its essentials, and for that reason I adhere very strongly to the principle of this disqualification, that you should rule out rigidly men who would come within one or other of these two categories. This is not the last word which I have to say upon that matter. I apologise to the House for so long a speech, but before I conclude I shall have to say one other word on this. I can well understand the fear there is in the mind of hon. Members on both sides of the House that a test of this kind might in its application be oppressively used, that men whom no one could describe as loafers or wastrels, but who are obnoxious to the authorities for some reason or another, might be kept out by the operation of this test; but I do not think there is quite the same danger of that when you have officials who represent the Imperial rather than the local authority dispensing the grants. They are much more independent than local officials. Still, I think it is very desirable that the test should be as automatic as possible, and I would go to this extent. I will propose an Amendment which will exclude from the operation of this subsection all persons who have been members of benefit societies, friendly societies, trade unions, and societies of that kind for ten years before they attain the age of sixty. I can well understand that after the age of sixty they might not be able to keep up their payments to the society, and it would be unfair to take it beyond sixty. That at once excludes from the possibility of their ever being subjected to inquisitorial examination as to their past industrial record something like 12,000,000 of the workmen of this country. The rest, therefore, would only apply to those who had never been subscribers to a friendly society, and never been members of a trade union or other society of that kind, which would prove that a man had been steadily employed and had done something for himself. I think that will remove at any rate any danger of the test being converted into an inquisitorial machine.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about women?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: That is a difficulty, but a rapidly diminishing difficulty, because women are being organised very largely into trade unions.

[Cries of "Oh."] Well, they are being organised gradually. Apart from that, I do not think there is the same danger in regard to women. The real danger arises in the case of the man who has taken a prominent part in some agitation in a village or town, and so rendered himself obnoxious to the authorities. There is an apprehension that they may take advantage of a clause of this kind in order to punish him for his past record in that respect. That could not possibly apply to women. I come now to the last, and perhaps the most important, criticism, and that is the one which relates to the disqualification of paupers. I want the House to remember, first of all, what I have already pointed out, that in every scheme which has been submitted to this House the pauper disqualification is a much severer one than the one which we contemplate, and not only so, but our disqualification is a dwindling one in its effect. I do not deny for a moment that it may operate partially and perhaps inequitably in some cases. It does seem hard that a man who happens to be seventy years of age, and is in receipt of poor relief when the Bill comes into operation, and who, if this Bill had been in operation, would have passed every test and received 5s. a week, should, because he was born a year or two too soon, only receive 3s. a week, from the Poor Law, and that another man who was only a few years younger should get his 5s. The sufferings of the second man would not be greater but perhaps less, and if those two cases are put side by side it does seem, on the face of them, rather hard, but the House must remember that if it had not been for this Bill the other man would have been a pauper too. You cannot in the course of a single scheme at once deal with every hard case. Social reformers, I think, make a great mistake if, when Government takes a single step in their direction, they insist upon their either not taking it at all or leaping up the whole flight at once. That is not the way to get on; it is the way to get a fall. This is a beginning, and a real beginning. It is obviously impossible to include paupers in the scheme until you have first of all dealt with the problem of the Poor Law. There is a Royal Commission sitting at this moment on that question. If we had been really anxious to shirk facing the problem of old-age pensions we might easily have said: "We will deal with old-age pensions after the Commission on the Poor Law has reported." Instead of that we say we will not wait for the Report of the Commission. In order to have a logical and complete scheme you ought to have a scheme which deals with the pauper, but as we cannot have that we would rather begin with an incomplete scheme and do something for the 572,000 persons outside the Poor Law. We say therefore we will not let them wait until the Commission Reports. They are seventy years of age and cannot wait. We will make a real start and then, when we get the Report of the Commission, we will include all those who under its recommendations might be treated as pensioners rather than as paupers. Moreover, it is obviously impossible to include the paupers, because that would involve an addition of from£3,500,000 to £4,000,000 to the cost of the scheme. I know that it has been suggested that we might go to the local authorities and ask them to refund us £2,000,000 which would be saved, but I should like to ask any hon. Member whether he would take the responsibility of saying that once this money is given away they are prepared to support a plan by which the local authorities shall refund the money to the Exchequer to that extent. It is obviously impossible that we should get the whole of this money back to the Exchequer. What makes it all the more difficult to deal with this problem is that we have to face two difficulties. In dealing with pauperism we shall have to discriminate and distinguish between deserving and undeserving paupers, and that will be much better done after we have received the Report of the Commission. Besides this difficulty of discrimination, we shall also have to deal with the further problem of the relations of local and imperial finance. These are two things which the Chancellor of the Exchequer must have in his mind and must deal with at the earliest possible moment. It may be said that we are postponing indefinitely the inclusion of the pauper. But if the House will only look very closely at the disqualifying clause, they will find it is to the interest of the Government to deal with this at the earliest possible moment, because otherwise by the action of boards of guardians pretty well all the pauper class over seventy years of age will be gradually put on to the pension list. Therefore, it will be to the interest of the Exchequer, in its own defence, to deal with this problem effectively, with a view both to discrimination, and also to adjusting the relations between the local and Imperial Exchequers in order to get a satisfactory, if not a logical, basis of operations with regard to these cases. The pauper disqualification is not merely on the face of it provisional, it is really provisional, until Parliament otherwise orders. Parliament will have to make its order at a very early opportunity, otherwise the Exchequer would suffer very severely, because a scheme for £10,000,000 would be converted into a scheme for something like £11,500,000, unless something be done in the course of the next three or four years to deal with this problem. I want the House to remember that. I think I have dealt with most of the disqualifications in this scheme. I must say, in summing up all these disqualifications, that we have to look at the finance at our disposal. Remember what a wealthy man does when he considers the charity which he is going to dispense in the course of a year. He does not look merely at the needs of the the locality; he looks at his own means, and having made up his mind what his means are for the current year, he decides to dispense his charity within those means, picking out those objects which are most deserving of the funds at his disposal. That is exactly what we have done. We say that in the course of next year we shall be able to find a sum of money which will at any rate finance the scheme on these lines. Later on we shall be able to find more. Unless I am mistaken, I see that a tariff reformer opposite is already making a mental note of the effect of this admission. But there is one thing common to both schools of finance—that no financial proposals you can ever submit will mature at once. It is much more true of protectionist finance, but it is quite true also of free trade finance, that the taxes you put on do not mature at once; they do not fructify in the course of a year. It is only in the course of two, three, or four years that you get the full benefit of any financial proposals submitted to the country. We have come to the conclusion that in the course of next year at any rate we cannot see our way to propose anything which will cost more than the figure which I have already indicated to the House. I would warn those who are sincerely friendly to old-age pensions, that if they will take the trouble to peruse the criticism directed against not this scheme merely, but every scheme of old-age pensions, by honest and sincere opponents, they will find that use is made of these disqualifications, not in order to widen or liberalise the scheme, but in order to destroy it. I wonder whether hon. Members read carefully a very able article whch appeared in the *Spectator* last Saturday week criticising the scheme of the Government. They have taken a very consistent course; they are the official organ of the new anarchist party which has appeared in this House. They oppose the scheme, they have always been against it, they are against all schemes of this character. They are frankly and ruthlessly individualist. What is the line they take? First of all they opposed old-age pensions at the expense of the State in any shape or form. Then they proceeded to analyse and condemn our disqualifications with regard to pauperism, in respect of thrift, and of merit, taking them one by one and condemning them all; and then they said it might be objected that these two positions were inconsistent, that first of all they objected to any burden being placed on the community, and then they condemned disqualifications which had the effect of lessening that burden; but they added that they were entitled to take their own way of opposing old-age pensions. I ask the House to bear that in mind. They put it quite frankly, and even said brutally—

> "We know perfectly well that if you eliminate these disqualifications you will add so much to the burden of the State that the Government will have to abandon the scheme."

That may be true, and that is their way of killing old-age pensions. I invite the supporters of old-age pensions who are just as sincere in that support as opponents are sincere in their opposition, not to fall into the trap, and I ask them to support the Government not merely on the general principle of the Bill, establishing at the expense of the State provision for old age, but also in the disqualifications which on the face of them may appear harsh and unjust for the moment, and all for the same reason. This is purely an experiment. Every scheme of this kind must be. It is true that you have systems in operation in New Zealand and Australia, but that is a very different thing; you are dealing there with a much simpler civilisation. You have never had a scheme of this kind tried in a great country like ours, with its thronging millions, with its rooted complexities; and everyone who has been engaged in any kind of reform knows how difficult it is to make way through the inextricable tangle of an old society like ours. This is, therefore, a great experiment. It is made in an old country for the first time. We put it forward as an incomplete one; we say it is a beginning and only a beginning, but a real beginning. We do not say that it deals with all the problem of unmerited destitution in this country. We do not even contend that it deals with the worst part of that problem. It might be held that many an old man dependent on the charity of the parish was better off than many a young man, broken down in health, or who cannot find a market for his labour. The provision which is made for the sick and unemployment is grossly inadequate in this country, and yet the working classes have done their best during fifty years to make provision without the aid of the State. But it is insufficient. The old man has to bear his own burden, while in the case of a young man who is broken down and who has a wife and family to maintain, the suffering is increased and multiplied to that extent. These problems of the sick, of the infirm, of the men who cannot find means of earning a livelihood, though they seek it as if they were seeking for alms, who are out of work through no fault of their own, and who cannot even guess the reason why, are problems with which it is the business of the State to deal; they are problems which the State has neglected too long. In asking the House to give a Second Reading to this Bill, we ask them to sanction not merely its principle, but also its finance, having regard to the fact that we are anxious to utilise the resources of the State to make provision for undeserved poverty and destitution in all its branches.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): The right hon. Gentleman has made his statement of the Government proposals, and I am bound to say, except for the concession which he has announced his willingness to make in regard to the sliding scale, I do not think the Bill improves very much on acquaintance. The right hon. Gentleman has dealt with a variety of questions which I will endeavour to meet in the course of the observations I have to make to the House. The right hon. Gentleman had a great deal to say on the question of cost, which perhaps is the most important question of all that we have to consider in connection with this subject. The House will remember that originally the cost was estimated by the Prime Minister at £6,000,000, but now we are authoritatively informed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the cost will be £7,500,000.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Not at the beginning; that would not be the cost next year.

MR. CHAPLIN: I am speaking of the cost of the scheme, and I understand from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it has grown.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No; not next year.

MR. CHAPLIN: It was a fault of hearing. However, we know that the cost is £6,000,000. The right hon. Gentleman went on to say that it is to be £6,000,000 now, but that all our experience points to this, that the number of what are now disqualifications will diminish in the future. The right hon. Gentleman further went on to say, with particular pride in his own scheme, that this was the most liberal measure that had ever been proposed to the House of Commons, far more liberal indeed than the measure suggested by the Committee of which he and I were members in 1899. The right hon. Gentleman was not accurate on that point. Under our proposal, it is perfectly true that half of it was to be paid out of the rates. But we looked further ahead, a good deal further ahead, than the right hon. Gentleman has done in the course of his observations this afternoon. The scheme which we then proposed was to cost £10,000,000 in 1901; it was to cost £12,500,000 ten years afterwards; and it was to cost, ten years after that again, £16,500,000. Therefore, putting aside the question of the rates altogether, so far as expenditure was concerned, the scheme of 1899 was far more liberal than that of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: From 1921.

MR. CHAPLIN: Yes; but I should like to know what the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman will be in 1921. He has enlarged on the duty of statesmen to look forward, and to form a most careful estimate of what their expenditure is going to be in the future, but I do not think that he has looked forward sufficiently with regard to his own Bill. The age is seventy. No one knows better than the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it is extremely improbable that the age of seventy will remain always in their measure. The age in our proposal was to be sixty-five. What is going to be the cost of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme even for one year supposing the age were sixty-five instead of seventy? I am not sure the age was not described as a dwindling disqualification, or was that applied to some other term? I have very little doubt in the future seventy will dwindle into sixty-five. But we have not had a shadow of a figure as to what the cost is likely to be under those circumstances. It would be much more to the point if the right hon. Gentleman when dwelling upon the question of cost had given the House some idea, when he enlarges upon the necessity of being careful on this subject, of what is the ultimate expense that he looks forward to as likely to arise from this Bill in the course of years to come, and which may probably arise even while right hon. Gentlemen opposite are still in office. I should like some Member of the front bench before the debate is over to tell us what, in their opinion, would be the cost of the Bill, assuming they found it necessary and desirable to reduce the age from seventy to sixty-five, and I hope I shall not meet with the reply given to our question just now that it was merely a quibble. The right hon. Gentleman dealt with the question of pauper disqualification at some length as a very important subject, as most undoubtedly it is, and he put this question to anyone who would rise on this side of the House. "Are we prepared," he said, "to go back from this scheme and put any charge on the rates?" As far as I am concerned I should say most certainly we are not, and I am content to found that opinion on one fact alone. I could say a good deal in connection with the growth of rates, but it is unnecessary now. But take the local debt and the enormous growth there has been in that respect alone. In 1896–7 it was £252,000,000, and in 1904–5 it was £466,000,000, an increase of 80 per cent. Under these circumstances, I, at all events, would absolutely refuse to have anything to do with anything which was not absolutely necessary to increase that burden in the future. The right hon. Gentleman dealt at some length with a question which had been raised by the *Spectator*. I read a very remarkable article in the *Spectator*, and the most remarkable part of it was that in which the writer demonstrated in the most conclusive manner that the proposals of this Bill with regard to the 10s. limit could have no other effect than absolutely to discourage thrift. Upon that part of the views put forward by the *Spectator* I observe that the right hon. Gentleman had nothing whatever to say. To go back to the Bill itself, I am perfectly willing and ready to admit that it has some redeeming features at all events. One of them is that it absolutely discards once and for all the principle of universal pensions. That is something to the good at all events. Secondly, it gives the local authorities some power of discrimination. That again undoubtedly, in my judgment, is good as far as it goes. Then we have been told to-night as we have been told before that this measure is, and must be regarded as, experimental and provisional to a very considerable extent, and under all the circumstances I do not hesitate to express the opinion that that is a wise decision on the part of the Government. On the other hand, the criticisms which have been made against it, and the objections which are taken to it in various quarters, are some of them exceedingly serious, and I think myself they are all grave. Firstly, there is the objection that this scheme is not contributory. Secondly, that it was in its original form, as proposed by the Prime Minister, a direct discouragement to thrift. Thirdly, there is the case of two or more old people dwelling in the same house and the treatment which is to be awarded to them, which I am bound to say, although there may be something to be said for it, does seem to me peculiarly harsh. I will not dwell further upon the question of the age except to repeat this, that it seems to me that it can never be expected to be considered as a permanent solution of this problem. This fact aggravates what is perhaps the most material objection of all to the Bill, namely, that no indication whatever has been given to the House as to the methods of taxation which will be necessary, and how far they will be conducted on lines which are just and fair and equal to all parties concerned. On that cardinal point we are all, both Parliament and the people, absolutely and entirely in the dark. Less than one-fourth of the provision for this Bill has been made; the rest has been left by the Prime Minister as a legacy to his successor, and although, I suppose, there are no two men in this House more widely dissociated in political opinions than the right hon. Gentleman and myself, I cannot find it in my heart to be hard enough to say I heartily wish him joy. I want to say a word or two directly upon some of these criticisms and objections which I have noticed. If in doing that I should appear to be exceedingly hostile to some of the individual provisions of the Bill, it must not be taken that I am on that account hostile to the institution of old-age pensions. On the contrary, I am, and have been for some years, in favour of a policy of that kind, and in my own way I may have done something perhaps to contribute towards that end. One thing must be obvious to everyone who has endeavoured generally to make himself acquainted with the question, and who has compared the Bill now before us with the original proposals of the Prime Minister: that is, that this subject has not been half thought out, as any proposal of this enormous importance ought to have been, before being submitted to Parliament. Not only that, but I think the House will also be of opinion that even the Prime Minister himself was very inadequately informed on many parts of the question. This was shown most clearly by the reasons which the right hon. Gentleman gave for dismissing and ruling out at once all plans for contributory schemes. What he did when he first dealt with this question was to give as his reason the result of the contributory scheme in Germany at the present time. He pointed out that the result of the contributory scheme which had been established in 1889 was that in 1907 there were only 126,000 persons out of a population of 52,000,000 in receipt of old-age pensions. These pensions began, it is true, in 1889, but that Act has been repealed by the Act of 1899, and it is a fact that under the later of these two Acts it is not a question of 125,000 or 135,000 pensions, but there are at this moment no less than 962,277 pensions.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): They are not old-age pensions.

MR. CHAPLIN: They are old-age pensions, with great respect. They are given under the same Act. They are better than old-age pensions. They are pensions given before the age of seventy to people who are incapacitated to the extent of a third of the work which could be performed by those in perfect health and strength occupying or pursuing the same work and profession. As regards the system in Germany there are features in connection with it which are far more favourable to the working classes than anything which is proposed or has hitherto been proposed on this side of the water. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman must excuse me for saying—whether he knew it or not, of course, I do not know—that a more misleading statement, when he said there were only

126,000 old-age pensions in Germany, I do not suppose has ever been put before Parliament on a question of such importance as this. Of course, I am not accusing the right hon. Gentleman of intentionally misleading the House, but whether he intended it or not it certainly had that effect.

MR. ASQUITH: I do not agree.

MR. CHAPLIN: You do not think they are old-age pensions. It is very difficult for the right hon. Gentleman to find another name or description for them. How the mistake arose I really do not know, because there was, and there is, and ought to have been in the possession of the right hon. Gentleman a document from the Board of Trade, and as he says they are not pensions, I will use the language given in his own Return. The Prime Minister said that the number of persons in receipt of pensions in Germany was 126,000, but as a matter of fact the total number of pensions in course of payment in Germany on 10th January, 1907, was 962,277. When the Prime Minister made that statement why did he not give the House the benefit of that further information which must have been in his possession?

MR. ASQUITH: I did not know anything about it.

MR. CHAPLIN: I shall be willing to leave that to the consideration of the House. Then the right hon. Gentleman proceeded to use language which was exceedingly serious because it, *pro tanto*, discounts the value of all the other arguments he has been using in support of this measure. He stated at the National Liberal Club on Friday that it was a ridiculous mistake to suppose that this was a crude and hasty proposition thrown upon the Table without regard to its deeper and wider effect, and that it had been the subject of most thorough and careful deliberation by the Government. How, then, can the change be accounted for? Much has been said on the subject of wastrels and of clauses to deal with this class of persons. These may be perfectly right, but they are at variance with the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman when he spoke of the conditions to be laid down. With regard to the granting of pensions the conditions included the age, *status*, and character. I think that the less we inquire into character the better. I was so struck by this condition that I remember asking the right hon. Gentleman whether it was the intention of the Government to give a pension to a notorious drunkard, and no answer was given to the Question. I asked the Question again and still no answer was given, but when the Bill came into print, although there is to be no inquiry into character, there is a strong restriction against the granting of a pension to a notorious drunkard. Now I come to the subject which I raised in a Question, which the Prime Minister answered to-day. I asked that Question because I had seen it stated in the newspapers that communications of this kind had been addressed to friendly societies, and I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for doing what he has done to try and give me an answer to my Question in time for this debate. As we have not been able to get the replies to the circular issued by the right hon. Gentleman to friendly societies, I shall be obliged to make use of some information of my own which I have succeeded in getting. The circular containing the questions has already been published in a Welsh newspaper.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: What paper?

MR. CHAPLIN: Last Saturday's *Weekly Mail*, which is the leading paper in the west of Wales, or at any rate that is how the paper describes itself.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is a Conservative paper.

MR. CHAPLIN: I did not know that there was a Conservative paper in that part of Wales. The questions contained in the circular were as follows: (1) In your opinion will the passing of a non-contributory Bill for old-age pensions have an injurious effect upon friendly societies? (2) What will be the effect upon the thrift of the class from whom the members of friendly societies are drawn? (3) Has the intention of the passing of such a Bill already affected in any way the membership of those societies? I think each of those questions is exceedingly to the point, and I deeply regret that we have not had the answers to them in time for this debate. I am, however, able to point to opinions given on this point by some very prominent members of friendly societies. Take, for example, the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows which held its annual conference at Cardiff last week. It was presided over by the Grand Master, Mr. Alfred Dempsey, who expressed his opinion that the old-age pension proposals of the Government were most unsatisfactory, and that a non-contributory system was Poor Law relief by whatever name it might be called. [AN HON. MEMBER: What was their resolution?] This was their resolution—

> "While approving of the proposal to provide State pensions for old and necessitous workers, this annual conference strongly urges upon the Government and the House of Commons the desirability of ensuring that no person who would otherwise be eligible for the State allowance shall be deprived thereof by a sick allowance or superannuation benefit from a friendly society."

That is the reply to the second question which I read out. I will give the House the opinion of another Grand Master, although I have not his permission to state his name. Upon the question of non-contributory schemes he says—

> "A non-contributory scheme of old-age pensions must have an injurious effect on friendly societies from two main causes. The first is the provision of an old-age pension for which no direct payment is to be made by the recipient in his earlier years, which will have a deterrent effect upon the recruiting of young men for the ranks of friendly societies."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: What society does he represent?

MR. CHAPLIN: I am not in a position to say. He goes on to say—

> "The announcement of the intention to provide non-contributory old-age pensions has prejudicially affected the membership of friendly societies."

He says it has done that already. [AN HON. MEMBER: Who is this Past Grand Master?] I have already stated that I have not his authority to state his name. He gives an instance of what happens in these cases. He says—

> "After the promises that have been circulated and the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in the next Budget a large sum of money would be ear-marked for the purpose of redeeming these promises he was confronted with the following question: A young man was asked if he belonged to any friendly society, and as he did not he was requested to join the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. He replied: 'No; why should I? I can work. I am young, and when I get old the Government will give me a pension.'"

I think I have said enough on this point to show that at all events in the absence of the knowledge which could be derived from the representatives of these societies we have some ground for believing that the great friendly societies of this country are apprehensive as to the effect of this Bill. I pass for the moment to the question of the discouragement of thrift, upon which they have something to say. The Prime Minister said at the National Liberal Club on Friday last—

> "There is nothing in our Bill that is in any way hostile to existing agencies for the promotion of thrift, nor indeed to the subsequent engrafting, when Parliament should see its way to take that step, upon this Bill of a State-aided contributory plan."

I have here a letter from the Secretary of another large society, the Hearts of Oak, which I received only this morning, and it was written after reading the statement made by the Prime Minister at the National Liberal Club on Friday last. He says—

> "I notice that, in a report of a speech by the Prime Minister at the National Liberal Club last night, as it appears in the *Daily Telegraph*, Mr. Asquith stated that there is nothing in the Bill in any way hostile to existing agencies for the promotion of thrift. It appears to me that it is not clear from the text of the Bill how this can be possible, because if a man is a member of two friendly societies, receiving sick benefits of 5s. a week from one and 6s. from the other, he will be disqualified from receiving his pension from the State. The temptation, therefore, to relinquish his membership in one of these societies is obvious, and the probability of friendly societies being affected is much greater than one would suppose, by reading the statement above referred to."

Then he went on to say—

> "This is a matter which is agitating the minds of the whole of the friendly societies, namely, the temptation of a man to relinquish membership of a society, or to abstain from becoming a member of such society will be so strong as to have its effect on the future welfare of such society."

I say with all the seriousness in the world that if an effect of that kind is likely to accrue from this Bill in its present form I hope and trust that Parliament will hesitate, and hesitate long, before it gives sanction to any proposal of the kind. I cannot imagine a greater blunder, I should say a greater crime, on the part of any Parliament or Government in these days, than to take action which would seriously prejudice the future welfare and the position of those great societies which have for years in the past done such splendid and such noble work. It is work that has been attended with very much benefit and advantage to the members who belong to them and the poorer classes of this country. I am sure that this is a question upon which Parliament ought to be most careful before it gives its assent to any provisions whatever in any Bill, whether it be moved by a Radical or a Unionist Member, which by any possible means could have that effect. I wonder how many people there are in the country—I wonder how many there are in this House who have carefully thought out or read for themselves what the work of these great societies in this country has been, and what it amounts to. I read a statement the other day which I own had a great effect on my mind. The statement was made by a man who, I suppose, is perhaps the highest authority upon this subject we have in this country. He said—

> "There are in the United Kingdom 34,000 separately organised institutions having for their object the promotion of thrift. They have a total membership of 19,500,000; and their accumulated funds amount to over £184,000,000. If you add to these over 15,000 savings banks with 12,000,000 of depositors and funds amounting to £242,500,000, roughly, you have nearly 50,000 of such institutions with 31,000,000 of members."

Of course what I am putting before the House now is not limited by any means to friendly societies alone. It includes every society which may be described as a benefit society, the object of whose being is the promotion and the encouragement of thrift in this country. He adds—

> "They own in one form or another the enormous capital of £456,000,000."

All this is the gradual result of thrift which has been practised for a vast number of years since these societies were first organised after the great change in the Poor Law many years ago. The benefits of this splendid and noble work, for it deserves that name, have been scattered far and wide among hundreds and thousands of people in this country. My authority for the statement I have quoted was the Chief Registrar in this country. The statement was made in public nearly a year ago in London at a meeting which was held upon the question of thrift. My last words tonight upon this subject shall be these. Woe betide the party, woe betide the Government, who by any deliberate act of their own shall do anything to impede or to injure the noble and great work which has been accomplished by those societies.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) moved an Amendment declaring that—

> "While it is desirable that the State should organise aid for the unfortunate by establishing and assisting a general system of insurance against the principal risks of life, it is unjust to spend the taxpayers' money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income, and character."

He said he was not opposed on general grounds to the organisation of a system of old-age pensions, but he was strongly opposed to the particular scheme which the Government had put forward, because he held that the scheme was unjust in principle, and as a consequence was necessarily unjust in almost every one of its details. That arose from the fact that if they started with a false principle, they were bound to set up arbitrary distinctions which must act harshly upon particular individuals and give a favour to one man while they refused the same favour to another man who had an equal title to it. Why should they start by saying that people over the age of seventy were entitled to a pension any more than by saying, for instance, that all people afflicted with blindness should receive a pension? He would take a more striking case—that of a woman who was left a widow with a young family. What did the Government do for her? All the Government did for her was to tax the food of her children in order that they might have money to give pensions to old people who were possibly much better off than she was. That was the essence of the scheme. Taxes would be kept on the necessaries of life in order to provide pensions for old people. The whole idea of giving pensions instead of leaving people to draw relief from the Poor Law was that the Poor Law was humiliating. They had heard that stated in all the speeches in favour of the Bill. What were they going to do for the man over sixty and under seventy? Was he to go on suffering humiliation, or was he to starve? There was as much humiliation in receiving Poor Law relief at sixty as at seventy years of age. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the somewhat extraordinary speech which he had delivered that afternoon seemed to be apologising in almost every sentence for his scheme. In fixing the age-limit at seventy, the Government were flying in the face of experience. What had the trade unions done? The Amalgamated Society of Engineers provided pensions which were drawable at the age of fifty-five in cases where on account of infirmity or old age a member was unable to obtain the ordinary wages of his trade. He had read a pamphlet written by the hon. Member for the Blackfriars division on this subject. The hon. Member had made an error in regard to one matter. He had tried to make out that the cost of a universal system without any test as to character would be very small, because a good many people would never apply for their 5s. In proof of that he stated that 20 or 30 per cent. of qualified members did not apply for the pensions provided by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers at the age they were entitled to draw them. He forgot to mention that if a man applied for his pension he must give up work. [Cries of "No."]

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): Only up to a certain amount.

*MR. HAROLD COX said that if a man could earn £2 a week, he would not give up that job in order to get the society's pension. The Carpenters' and Joiners' Society had a pension scheme which entitled a member to draw his pension at the age of fifty if age or infirmity made him incapable of earning the ordinary rate of wages. The pensions of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers varied from 7s. to 10s. a week, according to the number of years of membership and the amount of the subscriptions. The Carpenters' and Joiners' Society paid from 7s. to 8s. a week. These were figures which would commend themselves as reasonable. The proposal of the Government was to give 5s. a week. The Prime Minister, speaking a night or two ago at the National Liberal Club in regard to the payment of 5s. to people over seventy, said—

> "It will, without any offence to their self-respect or to their proper pride, without any feeling of humiliation, put at least half a million of old folk, the veterans of our industrial army, entirely beyond the reach of pecuniary anxiety and care."

What kind of world did the Prime Minister live in? He wondered whether his right hon. friend had ever tried to live in London on 5s. a week, and if he had found himself entirely beyond the reach of pecuniary anxiety and care. Why! he would not get a single room for less than 3s., and then he would have 2s. left for food or clothing. There were a great many people who, even if they had the money, could not take care of themselves. On that point there was valuable evidence from Australia. The Prime Minister, in recommending the scheme to the House, said that he looked rather to Australia and New Zealand than to Germany or Denmark for experience. In the Report of a recent Royal Commission on old-age pensions in the State of New South Wales there was an interesting statement as to how old-age pensions worked out in practice. The Registrar of old-age pensions in that State in his evidence, said—

> "A man told me that after searching for a long time he had found his sister, who was an old-age pensioner. She was located in the poorest part of the city, where she had fallen into the hands of a boarding-house keeper of very low type. He had great difficulty in obtaining access to her, and it was only after he had called in assistance that he was able to rescue her. He found her very poorly clad and covered with vermin."

And yet they were assured that 5s. a week would place old people "entirely beyond the reach of pecuniary anxiety and care." In particular there was evidence of the effect of drink on the old-age pension question. So serious was that evil in Australia that it was recommended by the Royal Commission that it should be made a penal offence to give or serve drink to old-age pensioners.

AN HON. MEMBER: For giving one glass of beer to an old man?

*MR. HAROLD COX said there was exactly the same difficulty in our own country. He had a letter from the master of a workhouse near London, where they had a good many Army pensioners, in which it was stated:—

> "The guardians claim 1s. per day from all pensioners for each day they are relieved in the workhouse, but when the pension does not amount to 1s. per day they claim the whole. A very large majority of the pensioners are very artful. They discharge themselves from the workhouse very frequently during the quarter, and stay out days at a time, so that when their pensions become due they have a considerable sum to draw, which they spend in drink, consequently they return to the workhouse in a few days perfect wrecks, and without a penny in their pockets. As an instance I will mention —— who is in receipt of 17s. 6d. per week. The guardians claim 7s. per week during the time he is in the workhouse and 7s. a week is allowed his wife, who is separated from him under a magistrate's order, the balance the man receives himself. Last pension day he drew over £4, and in three days he returned to the workhouse penniless and suffering considerably from the effects of drink."

He might mention that he had frequently called the attention of the Secretary for War to this scandal, but as yet nothing had been done. If old-age pensions were paid as a right, the man might claim to be treated as other individuals in regard to the right to buy a glass of beer. But he denied that the right to buy a glass of beer carried with it the right to behave like a beast and get drunk. As to the point with regard to saving of the rates, he was glad to see it dropped now by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But he had an extract from an article in the *Financial Review of Reviews* by that well-known Australian authority, Mr. Coglan, who said:—

> "When the old-age pension system was introduced (in New South Wales) it was confidently expected that there would be a considerable reduction in the cost of asylums"

—the Australian equivalent for poor houses—

> "for destitute persons. No such reduction has been experienced."

While on this point he might say how remarkable it was to observe the changes that had already come over the Bill. When the Prime Minister introduced the Bill he told the House that the Government had carefully considered the relative merits of a fixed pension and of a sliding scale and that they had come to the conclusion that the fixed pension was preferable. Now a few weeks later the Chancellor of the Exchequer came forward and said that he was willing to reconsider the matter, and was quite ready to adopt a sliding scale. This probably explained why the Government were so anxious to have the guillotine Resolution, for changes were being made in essential features of the Bill from minute to minute. He agreed that the sliding scale was more equitable than a fixed pension; but the disadvantage of a sliding scale was that it encouraged dishonesty. It was easier for a man to adjust his income a little bit than a big bit, and it would be found, he was afraid, that with a sliding scale it would be the biggest liar who would get the biggest pension. But there were other difficulties that had not yet been faced in regard to an income limit. For example; let them take a very common case, where a man was living with his children. He had no income at all and yet was very comfortably maintained by his children. He might claim his pension, as he was undoubtedly entitled to it. That would result in merely subsidising his children, who might be in receipt of £200 or £300 a year. Again, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had just alluded to the large number of cases of pensions given by private firms and private individuals. Not long ago he made inquiry into the pensions given by a large private firm. These amounted to 12s. per week, and he had been informed that if the Government Bill came into operation as it stood it would be the necessary duty of that firm to knock off 2s. a week from the pensions now paid to their workmen. In such a case the Government scheme would only be relieving the wealthy employer; and that would apply to an enormous number of other cases. Then there was the case of landed estates. Landowners would say that if they had got to pay 1d. or 2d. additional income-tax to provide old-age pensions they would no longer pay the pensions they had hitherto allowed to their old workpeople on their estates. The next question was that of the character test. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had rejected the word "character" and preferred to speak of an industrial test. But it was not a question of words but a question of facts; and the root fact was that directly an industrial test or character test was set up there must be a committee of some sort to do the work of investigation. And whatever that committee was called, it would be in effect another board of guardians. The procedure of investigation would be the same, with just the same inquisitorial examination into the past history of the person who applied for a pension. They might make the test as mild as possible, and pressure would certainly be brought to bear on the Government to abolish all that was harsh in the test. But even so, hardship would necessarily arise when an honest man or woman had to go before the committee and answer questions. Take an example. One test was to be that a man had not been in prison for ten years. But there might be the case of a man who had been imprisoned twenty or thirty years ago and had since been living a respectable life in a neighbourhood where the people knew nothing of his past career, and where he had always been looked upon as a man with a stainless record. Let them imagine the feelings of that man standing before a committee dreading every moment that some question might be asked as to his past career. Was that the humane system which the Government said they wanted to introduce? There were very few people who had not some skeleton in the cupboard. Directly this new board of guardians, with the new title of Pensions Committee was established, they would have the evil of favouritism which always arose when a body of men had the power to spend other people's money in dispensing favours. Even if the favouritism did not actually exist the poor would suspect its existence. He knew of a case of an agricultural labourer who was earning 15s. a week, and who had the right to a certain number of loaves on Easter Day. The old endowment was controlled by the parson of the parish. The labourer was asked why he never went for his loaves, and his answer was, "Because you have to make too many ugly faces before the parson." He was afraid that people entitled to a pension would have to make a good many "ugly faces" before they got their pension. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that they had already found in New Zealand the necessity of making these investigations even more stringent than before. Mr. Pember Reeves in the *Financial Review of Reviews* for February, 1908, wrote:—

> "By March, 1902, the Government of New Zealand had taken alarm and a much more thorough-going investigation into character was set on foot. The Old-age Pension office, while made slightly more expensive, was greatly strengthened by the co-operation of its officers with the magistracy and police of the Colony."

Yet they had been told the New Zealand example was the basis of the Bill, so that here, too, old-age pensioners would be hunted down by the police, lest they should deceive the Pensions Committee. What was the alternative? He noticed that hon. Members opposite cheered every reference to "no inquiry into character." He wanted to know whether those hon. Members would carry that principle out to its logical conclusion, and go on to a platform and say that all drunkards, wife-deserters, pimps, procurers and criminals in the country were to get pensions at the expense of honest men?

AN HON. MEMBER on the LABOUR Benches: They are all dead before they are seventy years of age.

*MR. HAROLD COX: Does the hon. Member say that no persons of seventy have a bad record behind them?

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): There are plenty kept in the workhouse.

*MR. HAROLD COX: Yes; but the pensions are to be honourable and treatment in the workhouse dishonourable. The question he asked hon. Members opposite was, "Do you propose to give honourable pensions to men who dishonour our common humanity, and provide these pensions by taxing men who honestly earn their living?" He challenged them to go on a platform and say that that was what they meant. That was a dilemma from which there was no possibility of escape as long as they had a non-contributory system. They must either give honourable pensions to any number of blackguards, or have an investigation of character which would be painful to all the honest people. The only escape from that dilemma was by contributory pensions. The money then belonged of right to the pensioner, and there was no need for an inquiry into character. With regard to the possibility of a system of contributory pensions—which was the crux of the issue which he was trying to raise—the Prime Minister had adopted a most curious attitude. He had not argued the question himself, but referred the House to the Member for West Birmingham. This is what the Prime Minister said in his Budget speech—

> "The best statement you can find, and it is not only cogent but conclusive, of the objection from the point of view of practical politics and the actual exigencies in our own British social and economic life to a contributory scheme, is to be found in the speech of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham in this House on 22nd March, 1899. You will find there a lucid and forcible statement of the overwhelming objection to such a scheme. It is well-known that the right hon. Gentleman favoured it at one time, and this speech represents his considered views after he had carefully studied the whole problem."

He had taken the trouble to look up the speech of the right. hon. Member for West Birmingham, and this was what he said—

> "The one fatal objection to such a scheme is this, that if the benefit to be received at sixty-five is to depend upon the continuance of the payments a very large proportion of the persons who subscribe will by some temporary misfortune, some inability to provide the payments, be thrown out of the benefits; for a failure to pay a single payment may deprive a man not only of the pension, but also of the contributions he has already made."

That was the whole of the argument. With all respect to the right hon. Member for West Birmingham it was not a very wise objection. It was absurd to say that one failure to pay would deprive a man of the whole benefit, for there was no contributory scheme which did not provide for occasional lapses. The German scheme was full of such provisions. If the Prime Minister regarded this speech as conclusive against a contributory scheme he was really tempted to ask whether his right hon. friend regarded with equal sanctity the opinions of the Member for West Birmingham upon other questions. Parenthetically he might remark that in this very speech the Member for West Birmingham strongly urged that the rates should pay half the cost of the pensions. The Prime Minister argued that a fatal objection to a contributory scheme was that it would be impossible to start at once. He had repeated that at the National Liberal Club the other night, but there was nothing in it. The German scheme started immediately. The Germans had got over the difficulty in a very ingenious way, and he recommended that device to the Government as a possible means of escaping from the dilemma in which they had involved themselves by their curious system of tests. The Germans said that if a man had been at work for a considerable number of weeks during the past three years the presumption was that he had been a worker for the greater part of his life. So they said that they would begin at once to pay pensions to people who had been at work for 141 weeks during the previous three years. They got the revenue at once to provide the pensions, because the younger men began immediately to contribute. This was better than any of the Government tests, and was more in accordance with the demand which had always been put forward for old-age pensions, especially below the gangway. A phrase constantly used in this matter was that old-age pensions were to be given as a right, and not as a charity, as a recompense for previous services to the State. Did hon. Members below the gangway agree with that? ["Hear, hear."] They did; then they would be willing to accept some test to prove that there had been previous service to the State. Otherwise they would be throwing dust in the eyes of the public. He hoped he might say without offence that they had already been misleading the public by confusing the difference between the pension given to Lord Cromer and old-age pensions which they demanded for everybody.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why?

*MR. HAROLD COX said he was sorry his hon. friend could not see the difference between giving a pension to a man like Lord Cromer, who had done great service to the State, and to a man with regard to whom they would not take the trouble to ascertain whether he had done anything at all.

AN HON. MEMBER: Lord Cromer had a big salary.

*MR. HAROLD COX said that as regarded that it sometimes happened that when a trade union secretary, who had drawn what was for him a substantial salary and had served his society well, at the end of his time retired, he received a handsome present from his society. That was exactly what the State had done to Lord Cromer. He wished to explain a little more in detail exactly what the German system did, because unfortunately it had not yet been appreciated in this country, and he certainly regretted that the Government had not taken the trouble to send somebody to Berlin to find out how it worked. He went himself a year ago strongly prejudiced against it, and came back strongly in favour of it. The essence of the German system was that it did the thing that was actually wanted, not the thing that politicians fancied to be wanted. It gave a pension to the man when it became necessary that he should have assistance, and did not fix an arbitrary age. The scale of payments levied on workmen for their pensions depended on the wages they drew, and the amount of the pension depended upon the payment that had been made. In one of the latest Blue-books issued on the subject (Cd. 3657, p. 625) the case was given of a workman with a salary of £59 a year. He paid 2d. a week. The employer paid an equal sum, and the State made a fixed contribution. What did he get in return? At the age of forty-six, if he became infirm, he would be able to draw, not a miserable 5s. a week, but £16 4s. a year. That was the scheme which the Prime Minister had told them was scarcely worth considering. The employer in Germany was responsible for the payments. All people were not subject to compulsion. Others might voluntarily insure, and many did. With regard to lapsed policies, their ingenious device was to reckon the year as consisting only of forty-seven weeks. If a man paid for forty-seven weeks, that covered the whole year. If he missed more than five weeks in one year he could make up the loss in other years. That disposed of the idea that a man lost his pension if he was temporarily out of work. The cost to the taxpayer in Germany was less than £3,000,000 a year, and there were 14,000,000 people insured. The Prime Minister had unwittingly misled the House by saying that the German old-age pensions were only 126,000 in number. The point would be clear when he explained to the House that a man in Germany who was over seventy might either claim an old-age pension, if he was hale and hearty, or an infirmity pension if he was infirm, and the latter was usually higher than the former. Most people over seventy satisfied the legal definition of infirmity, and many preferred to claim the infirmity pension. The result was that they had over 800,000 infirmity pensioners and only 126,000 old-age pensioners. But the old-age pensions were gradually disappearing, because as years went by the contributions to infirmity pensions made those pensions progressively of more value in comparison with old-age pensions. Some day the "old-age" pensions would possibly disappear altogether, and then he supposed the Prime Minister would say there were no old-age pensions in Germany, although over 1,000,000 old people would be drawing pensions. That was not the whole advantage of the German system. It not only gave people the pension at the time they wanted it; it did more than that—it acted as a prophylactic against disease. The administrators of the German system had discovered that they had more pensioners coming upon their hands if they did not diminish disease, especially the disease of tuberculosis. He had in his hand the Report of the Local Government Board as to the treatment of consumption in other countries (Cd. 3657), and there was a chapter devoted to the effect of the German insurance system upon tuberculosis. He ventured to quote from pp. 632, 633—

> "The German Invalidity Insurance resolved to attempt to arrest the evils of tuberculosis by a great variety of measures, and in this way the organisations of the Invalidity Insurance have become since 1895, according to Herr Bielefeldt, the centre of the anti-tuberculosis movement in Germany. The Invalidity Insurance is able to afford to the assured the methods of treatment which may be necessary, no matter for what form of illness. It can place at their disposal special hospitals and institutions, sanatoria, air-cures, convalescent homes, mud baths, etc.;

and extensive use was made of this power in favour of tuberculous subjects."

Again on page 635—

> "Some insurance institutions send their patients, at the end of the treatment, to special convalescent or air-cure establishments, in order to strengthen them and to slowly accustom them to work, while others have organised agricultural colonies with the object of gradually restoring cured tuberculous persons to their former occupations or of introducing them to a new one."

These insurance institutions also tried to prevent disease by inquiring into the conditions under which the people worked and lived, and, if the illness had been caused by unwholesome conditions of work, a communication to the factory inspector sufficed to remedy the defect. Finally, there was a long description of the way in which the money obtained from the twopences and threepences a week was employed. It was employed to the extent of millions in building sanatoria, and, what was still more important, in building wholesome and comfortable homes throughout Germany. In other words they said to a man, "You shall contribute to your old-age pension. We will take the money from you, and we will spend a large portion of it in supplying one of your most serious wants, namely, comfortable homes for the working classes." There was even a better system than the German system, namely, that of Austria, which was to come into operation in January of next year. This combined the various German insurances into one insurance. The man who insured was certain to get something out of it—he would be maintained in sickness, in infirmity, and in old age. When he died his widow received a sum of money; and there was also provision for the children. It appeared to him that there was a full theoretical justification for the principle of compulsion. We compelled education; why, also, should we not compel thrift? They knew by experience that young people would not look ahead, and, therefore, they were justified in saying to them that they should make some provision for old age because, though they were not thinking about it while they were young, the time would come when they would value the provision made. Therefore, we should take from them something which would be sufficient to keep them in their old age, something which would give them an absolute property of their own, and which would make them free from dependence on their relatives or the Poor Law. The argument was used that men should be allowed to invest as they chose. Some men liked to invest by giving their children a good education, and then looking to the children to maintain them. That was probably the most human of insurances, but it was not always satisfactory. There were cases where the children did not respond. On the whole, he thought they should say to the young men, "It is far better for you to have something of your own, so that when old you shall not be dependent on anybody." He thought there was a strong case made out for compulsory insurance, giving a right to an inalienable pension. With regard to the question of women raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was asked, "How are you going to deal with the case of women who cannot insure?" He thought the right hon. Gentleman had forgotten what a very small sum was necessary to obtain insurance. One halfpenny a day would provide 5s. a week at sixty-five years of age, paid from the age of twenty, and even less if paid from below the age of twenty. It was absurd to say that a man or a woman could not pay a halfpenny a day for old age. What they were taking from the poor now in taxation on tea and sugar amounted to as much. It was objected to compulsory insurance that it would interfere with friendly societies, but there was no necessity why it should do so. It was perfectly possible to say to a citizen, "You must either insure under the State system, or you must insure in some voluntary society." That, he might mention, was what was done in Germany in the case of sickness insurance. We always looked upon Germany as a country of State Socialism, but while we were drifting to State Socialism, the Germans were doing their best to extricate themselves from it. In Germany they were very careful in regard to sickness insurance not to destroy voluntary societies which were doing excellent work. As to the practicability of his proposal, they talked as if the English workman would never submit to have a weekly levy upon his wages. But hundreds of thousands of them did it every week for their trade unions. More than that, there were scores of big firms in this country with whom it was a regular custom to make a weekly levy for the local hospital. There was absolutely no reason why the system should not be extended. They objected to compulsion, but surely taxation was compulsory. Was it not far better, if they were going to have compulsion, that they should tax a man for his own pension rather than tax him for somebody else's pension? Of course, there would be difficulties in working out the scheme. They were told that the Government had spent three or four months in carefully considering their scheme, and they had spent the last three or four weeksin rapidly changing it. No great reform was easily accomplished. Finally, the point was raised that under any contributory scheme some people would be left out. He thought that that was inevitable. It was so in Germany; it would be so here. For those left out there was the Poor Law, which it was customary to abuse; but the Poor Law asked no questions of a man beyond whether he was destitute, and if he was destitute it relieved him. It did not ask about the past, it asked about the present; and it applied, and was increasingly applying, a great deal of humane consideration. They would find, if they visited any of the workhouses, that there was constantly going on now a segregation of bad people from those who knew how to behave themselves. Respectable old people were being put into rooms by themselves, so that they might not be subject to foul language or bad temper. That was done with true kindliness, and was the best way of dealing with those people who could not be brought under a contributory scheme. But were there no difficulties with regard to the scheme which the Government had put before the House? Had they not observed a consciousness of those difficulties in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer just now—the same kind of consciousness, no doubt, as came to the poacher when he had accepted the office of gamekeeper. His right hon. friend was naturally anxious to cut down the scheme as much as possible, because he felt the difficulty of providing the money. The consciousness of those difficulties would be felt more and more by that side of the House when they realised for what purpose the financial difficulties of the Government would be used by hon. Members opposite. They had heard a good deal of talk about a general tariff which was to provide the means for paying old-age pensions. At the same time it was to provide the means for a bargain with the Colonies, for retaliation on foreign countries, and for making employment in this country by shutting out foreign goods. All that was to be done by a system of tariffs, and one of the dangers they had to contemplate was that the country might be tempted to embark upon this policy in despair of finding by other means the money for old-age pensions. But even a more serious danger arose from the kind of argument which was used to justify this scheme. For example, the hon. Member for Blackburn, in a speech last October, had put forward the doctrine that old-age pensions would relieve the labour market. He wondered whether that kind economic doctrine was accepted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If they could relieve the labour market by giving pensions, why wait till seventy? Why should they not begin to relieve it at sixty, or at forty, or relieve it to the maximum extent by beginning at ten? Then they had the hon. Member for Clitheroe, who looked upon old-age pensions as part of a general Socialistic scheme for redressing all inequalities of fortune by means of taxation. He would quote his words—

> "Until they secured a fairer distribution of profits, the Labour Party held that they were entitled to use the Budget to tax the wealthy in order to help others, and that was what they proposed to do with regard to old-age pensions."

He observed that the President of the Board of Trade the other day had given a good deal of support to that view. After having won a victory at Dundee by admirable speeches in denunciation of Socialism, he came to that House and proceeded to propound Socialistic doctrines of a most advanced character. Here was what the right hon. Gentleman had said. He mentioned that indirect taxation was gradually giving way to direct taxation, and went on to say—

> "We want to continue that tendency until in the end indirect taxation is reduced only to that class of indulgence which a wise Government would seek to check, and the burden of maintaining the cost of administration is in every respect exclusively borne by those who derive rents from land or interest from capital."

He had never heard a more grotesque theory of taxation. Just imagine how it would apply to that House. For example, he was informed that the noble Lord opposite, who was going to do him the honour of seconding the Amendment, earned a precarious, but, he hoped, an adequate income in the Law Courts. Was he to escape any taxation? The President of the Board of Trade—he said nothing about the meagre salary he drew for his services to his country now, but he had been engaged in other occupations in his life. He had written many books, and rumour said he had received handsome royalties for them. Those who had been wise enough and fortunate enough to read his books would not grudge him the royalties, but why should he escape taxation upon them? Why should he be free of all taxation in order that some old lady who had £200 or £300 a year from consols should have her income-tax doubled, trebled, or quadrupled? Was that a fair system? Personally, he lived by what he earned, and he would be ashamed if he did not make a fair contribution to the cost of the government of the country. He was quite sure that was the opinion of most Englishmen. He observed with great pleasure that hon. Members below the gangway had consistently supported the proposal that the income-tax should be extended downwards so that every man, however poor, might make some contribution in proportion to his means. But while they held that sound view they unfortunately also held a view that was very alluring, but which he thought was ultimately deceptive—the view that they could through the Budget redress the inequalities of fortune. It was very alluring. When one saw the hideous inequalities which existed at present, the horrible contrast between great riches and abject poverty, one was greatly tempted to say, "We will redress this injustice by means of taxation." If they could do it he would be in favour of doing it, but he did not think it could be done, for the proposal involved subsidising the industries of the country which were not paying a sufficient wage at present, and giving money to people not in return for the work they did but because they were poor. That meant that they were going to treat poverty as a permanent institution, and the necessary consequence was that they would create a vast number of dependants. The man who earned his living was independent. He could face his master as a man because he gave his work in return for his wages. But if they were going to give a man something in return for nothing they made him a dependant. He ceased to be an independent citizen and became a dependant on the will of some official or of some committee of elected persons consisting either of superior persons with charitable inclinations or of inferior persons with axes to grind. But whichever it was, he was a dependant, and no longer a free man as he was before. Therefore he held that the true ideal to set before them was to raise wages. That was the problem of all problems, because on that depended everything. On that depended housing, the feeding of children and old age. What he objected to in all these schemes of State charity was that instead of aiming at the abolition of poverty they tended to perpetuate poverty by treating it as a permanent institution. In the same way if they were going to argue that because wages were low in certain industries, those wages must be supplemented at the expense of the taxpayer, it meant they were going to say certain industries were parasitic and must be subsidised by the taxpayer. What would be the result? People would begin to say, "If you are going to have parasitic industries paid for by the taxpayer, why should we not pay for them in the simplest way, by putting a duty on foreign goods?" The free trade objection to a protectionist tariff, was that it created parasitic industries and the good industries of the country were taxed for the benefit of the bad industries. Thus by admitting the principle of a subsidy to badly paid industries they were giving away the free trade case. That was a danger which he thought had not been sufficiently faced. Some weeks ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer, *apropos* of nothing in particular, had described him as a champion of lost causes. He was not quite sure that he knew what that meant. For the past eight or nine years he had devoted the greater part of his life to fighting for free trade. Was that a lost cause? When he listened to the speeches of his right hon. friend he was sometimes tempted to fear that he thought so. Personally he did not share that opinion. He had too much confidence in the ultimate common sense of his countrymen to believe that there could be anything more than an ephemeral success for the strange movement which had captured the imagination and temporarily imprisoned the intelligence of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Even were it otherwise, even if he thought free trade were indeed a lost cause, he for one would not cease fighting for it. For he was not ashamed to confess that the principles of free trade were to him a living faith. In saying that he was not referring only to the application of those principles to the business of international buying and selling, though that alone was no little matter. It was no little matter that the teeming population of these islands was free to draw its sustenance from every quarter of the globe. It was no little matter that our manufacturers and captains of industry were free to assemble here every type of raw material that the world produced and every kind of machine and mechanical device that other brains had invented or other hands had fashioned, and thus aided were to build up, here in these little islands, vast and flourishing industries. That alone was no little matter. But there was something even more than that. So far as the relations of the citizens of a country to one another and to their Government were concerned the essential principle of free trade, stated in its simplest terms, was fair play all round—the principle which required the State to give equal consideration to all its subjects and which forbade the State to give gratuitous favours either to particular industries or to particular individuals. That principle he held to be of priceless value. In all the complexities, in all the temptations, of political life, it would enable them to steer a straight course and maintain unblurred upon their banner the device "Equal justice between man and man." He begged to move.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.), in seconding the Amendment, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had referred to him as an Anarchist. He preferred to describe his form of political belief as a reasonable trust in personal freedom and personal liberty. But he imagined that it was not only in this country that the bureaucrat had always thought that he who differed from him was an Anarchist. He presumed the Chancellor of the Exchequer was really, if one might attribute such a defect to so eminent a person, making a confusion between Anarchism and individualism. They did not appear to be in every respect identical. In the main question of principle that they had to discuss, it was fair to say that those who differed from the Government differed because they were of a more individualistic tendency than was shown in the immediate proposals of the Government. He did not wish to attempt to define socialism and individualism, but there were two very distinct principles on which they might proceed in approaching this question of old-age pensions. There was the principle that primarily it was the duty of everybody to provide for his own old-age, and provide for himself generally. That was the principle that he himself held, and he quite admitted that they were entitled to add to that that where for some reason or another the individual was unable to provide for himself, it was reasonable for the State to come in and give assistance to that individual. That was the principle on which the contributory system rested. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had a very strange view of what was meant by the contributory scheme. He said that all schemes of old-age pensions were contributory because everybody paid taxes. Of course it was quite true that every expenditure was to some extent contributed to by the general body of taxpayers, but nobody knew better than the Chancellor of the Exchequer that that was not what was intended by a contributory scheme at all. The essence of a contributory scheme was that a pension should be granted in return for a contribution made by the recipient. The other argument used was that it was impracticable, and there was a curious likeness between this and the argument put forward by the Government in regard to other great questions of the day. When the Education Bill was being discussed they were told that an alternative proposal was quite impracticable, because it was not approved of by the Bishop of St. Asaph. They were now told that a contributory measure was quite impracticable because it was not approved of by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. After the speech which had been made by the hon. Member for Preston the Government would have to do something a little better than state that the German scheme was really impracticable. To his mind there was no such impracticability about it, and he would not attempt to paint the lily, after the speech to which they had just listened. The essential theory upon which the contributory scheme was based was that there was to be no out and out gift of money by the State to a class, but that there was to be a subvention to thrift and a gift of money which was to be in return for some contribution made by the recipient. The contrary was that the State was bound to provide for all who required assistance. It might well be said that that was the socialistic theory, that it was the business of the State to step in and take upon itself the duty which ordinarily lay upon the individual. That appeared to him to be the true definition of socialism. When they looked at this measure and asked upon which of those two principles it was based, could anyone doubt that it was based upon the second? He agreed that there were scattered through the Bill provisions which bore testimony to the discussions which went on in the Cabinet before the measure was settled, and there were certain proposals which the individualist section had managed to instil into the main principles of the Bill. The main principle of Clause 1 was that all persons who fulfilled certain statutory conditions were to be entitled to a pension. It was necessary to inquire what class would obtain the benefits. What were the statutory conditions? It was clear that the very poor would not benefit; that was quite plain. The clauses which provided that those who had received Poor Law relief were not to be eligible was one bar to the poor. It was plain that a very large proportion of the very poorest must have received Poor Law relief at one time or another, and if they continued to receive it after the 1st January this year they would be disqualified. Then there was the provision against all those who had not habitually worked when not physically prevented from doing so. They heard a good deal about unemployment and they often heard that the man who was unemployed for a certain time became quite unemployable. All such men as that would be excluded from the benefits of the Government proposals. Therefore, it would not be the very poor who would be assisted by this scheme, nor would it be those who were sufficiently well off, such as the thrifty artisan who had saved a considerable sum of money. He assumed that the hard and fast 10s. a week limit would go after the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, and the sliding scale only made a difference in degree. The Government did not contemplate the assistance of the really admirable artisan who had put by sufficient provision for his old age. The class they proposed to assist was the artisan or worker who was fairly well off, but not very well-to-do, and who had made no provision for his old age. That was a very large and numerous section of the community, and that was the section whom the Government proposed to assist. They were now in a position to state shortly what the real proposal of the Government was. It was to make an enormous gift of money, originally stated to be between £6,000,000 and £7,000,000, to a very large section of the working classes who were possessed of very large electoral power. In the last Parliament they constantly heard it said, he thought very unwisely, by hon. Members opposite that the Party to which he had the honour to belong was in the habit of giving doles to various classes. It was said that they were in the habit of giving gifts of money to various classes. Why was that not said of this Bill?

MR. JOHN WARD: It is following your precedent.

LORD R. CECIL said the hon. Member would not find any precedent for a gift of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 to any particular class of the community. He did not say that it was necessarily wrong; all he wished to do was to call the attention of the House to the fact that this was a definite gift of 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 golden sovereigns out of the money of the general taxpayers to a particular class who possessed very large electoral power. The only reason why this was not described as a dole by hon. Members opposite was that this particular class happened to have a very large voting power in the country. Let the House remember that this was only the beginning. He was using the ordinary thin end of the wedge argument, but he would remind hon. Members what had been said by Ministers in recommending this scheme. The Prime Minister had stated that it was avowedly and professedly a temporary measure and that there was no finality about it. The scheme began at £6,000,000 and it had now risen to £7,500,000, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had shown that it might automatically rise, unless something further was done, to £11,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had pledged himself to the proposition that it was not right for the State to require any contribution from those whom it was intended to assist. It did not need any violent stretch of the imagination to guess what would happen the next time the Government got in some little difficulty in regard to one of its measures—it might be the Licensing Bill or the Education Bill. They knew what had happened at recent bye-elections and they could easily imagine what would happen in the future. The Government would be able to say that 5s. a week for people over seventy was ridiculous and it ought to be extended to people over sixty-five years of age, and the pensions ought to be 10s. a week. Having stated that, perhaps the bye-elections would go a little bit better for the Government. He thought the right hon. Gentleman might be trusted in this matter, but any ordinary Government which had this great opportunity for wholesale persuasion of the electors at the expense of the taxpayer must go on extending these gifts as long as the finances of the country permitted it. Hon. Members opposite should remember that they had a great advantage, because hon. Members below the gangway proposed to do all these things, and to charge the cost to the millionaires. That was a very attractive programme. Some of his hon. friends thought they could charge the cost to the foreigner, and if a programme were put forward of universal pensions of 5s. a week, showing that the whole cost would be paid by the foreigner, they would win the election and sweep the country. Reference had been made to what had taken place in the United States after the last war. Hon. Members would recollect that after the war it was proposed to give pensions to the wounded, and in 1876, ten years after, the amount of the pensions was 27,936,000 dollars. Administration succeeded administration, and each suggested an extension and the total rose in 1866 to 64,000,000 dollars. In 1896 it had reached 138,000,000 dollars, and now the sum was 141,000,000 dollars. Once they started on a scheme of that kind the temptation of a democratic form of government was always in that direction. Therefore he asked the House to consider very carefully whether they were wise in accepting the principle in this measure of unconditional gifts to a large and important class of the community, more especially from a voting point of view. He did not wish to be an alarmist, but he felt that with the vast responsibilities of this country they had in the last resort only the national character to depend on. They had no right to assume that during the next twenty-five years they would have so peaceful a course to steer. No one who looked even from outside at the present international situation could fail to see certain elements of difficulty and danger in the future. And if they had to enter upon a great life and death struggle, as might well happen, and they had weakened the fibre of their people by a system and by a policy of which this was only the beginning, then the statesmen in the House of Commons who had sanctioned that miserable backsliding from the true statesmanship of Empire would have much to answer for. He begged to second.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'while it is desirable that the State should organise aid for the unfortunate by establishing and assisting a general system of insurance against the principal risks of life, it is unjust to spend the taxpayers' money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income, and character.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.) said the House would agree that the speeches of the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone and of the hon. Member for

Preston had put their case excellently as against the Bill. He was glad that they had definitely stated that there were two contending principles in this controversy—one the principle of Socialism, and the other the principle of individualism. So far as he himself was concerned, as a student of these matters, he could see no difference between individualism and anarchism. He and his colleagues of the Labour Party quite admitted that, to a very great extent, the principle upon which this Bill was based, after all, largely partook of Socialism. They quite agreed with the noble Lord that some Members of the Cabinet who were individualists, had made their impression on the Bill with regard to certain clauses. We were the richest country in the world, we were supposed to be the most highly civilised country, and yet it must be remembered that a large mass of our own people, through circumstances over which they had no control, which they could not help, and to which they were subjected whether they would or not, were to-day in a state of poverty such as, he supposed, existed in no other civilised country in the world. [Cries of dissent.] He was prepared to prove that later on if hon. Gentlemen protested against the statement. He thought the time had come when they should look to some new principle in legislation that might be submitted to the House in order to deal with a problem of that character. He would prove that the condition of the poor was, as he had said, in many instances due to circumstances over which they had no control. He knew from personal experience that there were many working men, and, unfortunately, many working women, who were willing to work, but could not get work, no matter even if they were prepared to undersell the people who were working in factories. There they were, at the ages of forty-five and fifty years, and it was impossible to contemplate that state of things going on, as it was certain that it must undermine the whole fabric of modern society. If they wanted to carry out the principles on which society itself was based, certainly they must have some care for the units that made up society. The great philosopher, Herbert Spencer, declared that society was an organism, and that it was built up, as our bodies were built up, of units. If any portion of the body suffered, the whole body suffered. In the same way, where there was in society, poverty, suffering, and hunger, they could not get away from the fact that more or less it affected the whole of society. He submitted, therefore, that as a matter of self-preservation those who could afford to do it, those who got the best out of society, those who lived as full and joyous a life as any man could wish to live, ought to come to the rescue of those who were not so favoured. He was not making an appeal to the House at all; he frankly admitted that whenever an appeal was made to the House it always responded. He wanted to make out his case on other grounds. Let him deal with the people who were down at the bottom of the social ladder. It was useless to talk about contributory schemes of old-age pensions while the fact remained that two-thirds of the working classes of this country did not earn sufficient wages to keep them much above the standard of comfort existing in the workhouse. It had been said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the hon. Member for North Paddington that the average wage in this country was 24s. 9d. He was not prepared to accept that figure. He should say that the average worked out at about 18s. He challenged contradiction of that statement. Supposing that it worked out at the figure given by the hon. Member for North Paddington, the fact remained that they had got to the taxable limit so far as the working classes were concerned. If we had another great war like the South African War, costing £250,000,000, he submitted that we could not get the money by taxing the working classes in the same way as they were taxed for that war. Let it be perfectly clearly understood that the claim put forward from those benches was that old-age pensions should be given as a social right without respect to any qualification, and subject only to the exception laid down by the Prime Minister in his Budget speech, that nothing short of criminality should prevent people from putting their claim in and having it conceded by the House of Commons. In spite of the condition of the working classes which he had mentioned, a large number of them had for years built up their great trade unions and friendly societies. What had happened in the case of these unions and societies? The circumstances connected with the development of the economic system of the country, and with industrial conditions, had driven people more and more into the low plane in which they were to-day, and which was making it impossible for them to sustain even their friendly societies and trade unions. Among the members of these organisations were some of the most highly skilled workmen in the world. Take for instance the London cabinetmakers. They had been pitted side by side with Continental workmen, and they had always come out of the competition well. What was the position of some of them? He had met them during last winter sweeping the streets of London. If they had been offered work at their own trade, they could not have taken it, because they had sold their chests of tools to get bread for their wives and children. Children had been arrested for begging, and when the Court missionary went to the house he found that the father was a cabinetmaker. That was a condition of things which existed generally among a large section of the working classes, and to ask them to pay to a contributory scheme was, with all deference to what others might say, absolutely beside the question. A point which seemed to have been overlooked by the mover and seconder of the Amendment was that these were actually the people who had built up the wealth of this country. The national income was never greater than at the present moment, and it was increasing by leaps and bounds every year. These were the people who sustained the Army and Navy, and all the machinery of legislation and administration, and because they set up a claim that they should get something back in the shape of old-age pensions, it was said that that would be undermining their character. He could only say, with deference, that the hon. Members who made that statement did not understand what they were talking about. The right hon. Member for Wimbledon, when referring to contributory schemes, had read quotations from past grand masters of fifteen or twenty years ago, and not from existing grand masters. Every scheme of superannuation which to-day was incorporated in the rules of trade unions or of friendly societies was hopelessly bankrupt. That showed how ridiculous it was to talk about contributory schemes. The greatest millstones that hung about the necks of trade unions were the superannuation schemes attached to them. Members of these societies had constantly to increase their contributions in the shape of levies to keep the schemes anything like solvent. He submitted that to have a contributory scheme to which the working classes were to pay was utterly beside the mark. The tax would be so great on the general body of working people that it would not be worth having at all. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not seem to put much heart into his speech. The right hon. Gentleman would pardon him when he said that his speech was an apology for the position he had taken up, and largely, it seemed to him, an apology for the Bill itself. The right hon. Gentleman knew full well that the Bill now before the House was hopelessly inadequate. In fact the right hon. Gentleman indicated that when he said—

> "If you do anything to amend the Bill or increase the income limit, or reduce the age limit, or increase the pensions of two persons living together, you will kill the Bill."

He admitted that the right hon. Gentleman had made one or two concessions to the several criticisms that had been raised. One was that to members of trade unions or friendly societies there would be no industry test applied after they were sixty years of age. But did the right hon. Gentleman know that the average life of a docker was thirty-five years? Only recently the Dockers Union took a census of their members and found that only 4 out of 100 ever lived to the age of seventy. The members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers were regarded as too old at forty-five. There were actually notices posted up in the shops stating that nobody need apply for employment over the age of forty-five. And so, when they went the whole round of trade unions, it was found that after all the concession offered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was of very little value. So far as the Labour Members were concerned, it was well known that there were five points on which they wished the Bill amended, and when their Amendments were tabled they were going to force them to a division. When he introduced this question by Resolution in the session of 1906 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer said that to grant a pension to people of sixty-five years of age without restriction would cost something like £26,000,000 of money per annum; but in his Budget statement the right hon. Gentleman brought that sum down to £12,180,000, while the cost, if the age were limited to seventy years, would be £7,440,000, and the cost of administration was estimated at 3 per cent. by the Hamilton Committee, making a sum of £13,000,000 for a pension at sixty-five years. He submitted to the House that that would be a small addition to pay for pensions out of the resources of the wealth of this country. As to the pensions to old people living together, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that to give them 5s. each would cost £340,000; but, apart from the obvious injustice of the Government plan, that additional sum would not overweight the scheme. Women, he thought, were going to get off very badly under the Government scheme. He would quote from a woman's paper to show that. Suppose two sisters lived together, one with an income of 20s. and the other of 10s. a week. The average income would be 15s. per week and neither would get a pension. Suppose other two sisters lived together—one having an income of 20s. a week and the other nothing at all. The average would be 10s., but only one would get a pension of 5s. If a brother and sister lived together, and their total income was £1 a week, each would receive 3s. 9d. pension. The clause would work injustice to those living together in the same house. This particular clause would also affect all those persons who to-day were in receipt of pensions from their employers—of whom he was glad to say there were many—and also those who had annuities payable from compensation for injuries as also those living in almshouses. The true position was to give everybody a pension; the millionaire was just as much entitled to a pension as John Smith, who had only 9s. a week. That would be the simplest and easiest plan. He had sufficient confidence in our own British people to say that they would not claim a pension if they could do without it. He was sure that each Member had had numberless letters and resolutions from friendly societies which had held their annual meetings last week, protesting against this age-limit of seventy years, and asking for it to be reduced to sixty-five; and he was also sure that if the right hon. Gentleman was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the next fifteen years—which he hoped he would be—he would be asked to reduce the age-limit to fifty-five. [OPPOSITION cries of "Hear, hear."] Why not? People were old just now at forty-five, and if a pension was to be claimed as a right the age would be reduced fifteen years hence to fifty-five. He submitted that 75 per cent. of the pensions would, under the present scheme, be claimed by men who worked in the agricultural and rural districts. Had the industrial workers in the towns no claim? He did not want to say a word against the agricultural worker who was entitled to a pension as a social right; and he did not want to say anything to jeopardise his position; but he wanted to plead for more consideration being given to the man who stood in front of the forge, to the man who worked on the railways at the daily risk of his life, to the man who worked in the pit at deadly peril, and to the men who toiled and sweated in all the other great city industries. These ought to be benefited to more than 25 per cent. of their number. He would like the Chancellor of the Exchequer to test the workers in towns upon this Bill. He knew what the reply would be, viz., that they were unanimous that the age-limit should be reduced from seventy to sixty-five years. He desired to impress upon the House that the difference in the cost of giving a pension at the age of sixty-five as against the age of seventy was only a matter of £5,000,000, so that the Amendment the Labour representatives would move with regard to that would be in the direction of reducing the age to sixty-five. He was quite aware that the right hon. Gentleman had indicated that the Government would be prepared to reconsider their position with regard to the limit of income, but on behalf of himself and his colleagues he desired to say they were against any limit of income. Directly the scheme began to limit income it commenced to differentiate and create injustice somewhere and create dissatisfaction. It also undermined the great principle of the Bill itself which was that this pension was not a charity but was given as a right to all who cared to claim it because of the work they had done for the community. Here again they had the opinion of the great friendly societies which had declared in the great number of congresses which had taken place that they were absolutely opposed to the limit of income. They claimed and rightly claimed that so far as the benefits which they paid to their members were concerned they should be absolutely exclusive of any pension which any member might claim under this Bill. The right hon. Gentleman should, he thought, certainly give some consideration to the opinion of the great friendly societies. Another disqualification was the receipt of parish relief, but how about the people who had only taken parish relief in this year, 1908. As he read the Bill they would never be able to qualify for a pension. The right hon. Gentleman must see that the whole tendency of industrial life in this country resulted in a large number of people being paupers at sixty years of age, and so far as they were concerned the position was hopeless. The Bill would not deal with those who became paupers after they were seventy, and it disqualified those who became paupers before that age. The poverty test, therefore, should be done away with. He was much afraid that in this Bill they were to have a repetition of the principle contained in nearly all the legislation of this House, which made poverty a crime. That was an insult to the people of this country against which he protested. It had been stated over and over again that poverty was no crime, yet it was made a crime by this Bill in the imposition of such a test as this. Then with regard to the character test. There were people who said that this Bill had come through the most retrograde department of the Government, the Local Government Board, the department which dealt with poverty, and which he understood was responsible for subsection (b) of Clause 3. Who was to define the word "misbehaviour" in this subsection. They were going to set up a sort of inquisition and allow a number of busybodies to inquire into the whole life of a man who claimed a pension. These persons were to be the authorities to judge what was misbehaviour. Men of the world would pass little incidents in life's history by, but these busybodies would not. They would construe every act committed by man or woman into misbehaviour. Therefore, the character test must be abolished. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that it was not really a character test, but an industry test, and if that was so it should certainly be altered. Those were the five points of the Bill to which the Labour Party objected, and on which they proposed to move Amendments upon which they intended to take the sense of the House. The machinery of the Bill was splendid, because of its simplicity. It had been stated before and re-stated to-day, that this was but a beginning, but they must beware of the danger of a bad beginning. This was a bad beginning because the Bill had been regarded in a narrow parochial spirit, a spirit of giving these pensions as a matter of charity, of giving doles to the people, rather than the spirit which had been set up for thirty years in the matter of these pensions being given as a right. The businesslike way was to take a broad and generous view, and if the need was there, as undoubtedly it was, to grapple with it manfully by accepting the Amendments which would be moved by the Labour Party in Committee. He was afraid that with this Bill the character and reputation of this Government as statesmen would not be enhanced, but let them take their courage boldly in their hands and perform a great act of statesmanship by so amending the Bill that the points which he had suggested should be incorporated in it and put into operation at the beginning of 1909.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) said he had been forcibly reminded by this debate that the history of this Bill was precisely similar to the history of the whole movement of twenty years ago, when he went about the country advocating a Bill on the same lines and in many respects identical with the Bill now before the House. He was then met by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham with the suggestion of a contributory scheme. That was in 1890 and 1891. Immediately after that there was a suggestion of a universal pension such as that of the hon. Member who had just spoken. So that this Bill, based on the same lines as the Bill of 1892, had been met in debate with precisely the same counter proposals. Thus had history repeated itself. He thought the Government had done wisely in taking the line which they had. He did not agree with the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not his heart in this scheme, because, when he (Sir Walter Foster) was a member of the Government in 1892, he had not a colleague in that Government who supported him in his Bill, and the only Member of the present Cabinet who supported him was the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was a most able colleague on the Select Committee in 1889. If, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman had not his heart in this Bill it was a bad look-out for old-age pensions. His own regard for this Bill was naturally warm and paternal for it was largely a copy of his own Bill of 1892. But though he received it with gratitude he was bound to criticise some of its details. It did not altogether follow the model with that faithfulness which he desired. If it had done so, in his opinion, and possibly in the opinion of others, it would have been a better Bill. But it had the great merit of being a discriminating Bill, and discrimination was in his opinion the essence of the matter of old-age pensions which must be an honourable distinction for service to the State. There must be discrimination. Universal pensions would simply be glorified outdoor relief. Those men who had done good service to the State should be picked out and men who had worked hard and brought up families on £1 and less than £1 a week should be considered to have done good service to the State. Such men should be regarded as having done well by the State, and should not be left in their old age to the cold comfort that was to be obtained from our Poor Law system. It was for this that his scheme of 1892 was originally devised. After all, the most pathetic figure of the whole of our social organisation was the agricultural labourer, who never had a chance of saving if he had a wife and family. Such a man at the end of his life had nothing but the Poor Law under the present system. He wanted this man to have the reward of a distinguishing system, and not of an indiscriminate system, so that he should receive 5s. a week granted by the State in recognition of the services he had already rendered as a good citizen. The Government had, therefore, he thought, taken the right line with reference to this matter. They had also taken the right line in refusing to go any further in the direction of a universal scheme. They had not got the money for it. He had wondered why, in the course of his speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not used that argument, because it seemed to him that the right hon. Gentleman had not the money to meet the Amendments which many of them would like to move, He would say to his hon. friends who wanted to widen this scheme, that they should be content with the first step of getting this scheme put on the Statute-book, because it would be the beginning of much greater things. But let them look at the scheme at closer quarters. The Government had made this a discriminatory scheme, but he thought that in their methods of discrimination they had hardly acted wisely. In one respect, they had followed the Bill of 1892 in setting up a committee to exercise the discrimination. He had given up that view. Wherever they had a committee they were liable to favouritism, and very often corruption, in the administration of public funds. They would have the committee in this case adjudicating on the merits of candidates for old-age pensions. It ought to be done automatically, and he believed that adjudication on documentary evidence was a much better system. He would rather see it done by a County Court Judge on the report of a pension officer, in open Court, than he would have it done by a committee. These committees would be open to the influence of many interests. A man might cause dislike, there might be prejudices, or there might be political feeling. In the rural districts many men might be used harshly under the committee system, but that could not occur if the applicant had to apply in open Court, before a Judge who had before him the report of the local pension officer. In that direction he thought that the Bill ought to be amended. Then the system of discrimination was a little bit inquisitorial. If they were to have this committee inquiring into the question of a man's industry, then there must inevitably be those inquisitorial extensions which had been so unfortunate in the case of the Poor Law, and which they did not wish to repeat in the case of old-age pensions. He objected, therefore, to this system of inquiry. He thought that a man who produced documents as to where he had worked during the preceding two or three years fulfilled the industrial test. That was the system adopted in other countries, and ought to be adopted here. He saw no necessity for a committee to inquire into a man's past if he produced documents, showing that he had worked a certain number of weeks during the preceding three years, to the pension officer. Then, again, they had the question of crime. Although he thought crime ought to be a disqualification, he considered that the Bill was rather harsh with reference to it. As far as he read it, a man sixty-five years of age, when he got out of prison, might be disqualified until he was seventy-five before he received his pension. He did not think that anything so harsh ought to be permitted in such a Bill. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a remark with reference to the sliding scale. He thought that they must get rid of a hard and fast line by some sliding scale. It would be a monstrous injustice that a man getting 9s. 6d. a week should receive full pension while the man who had 10s. 6d. a week should receive nothing at all. Wherever they drew the line there was always difficulty and injustice, and to temper that injustice they must have some sliding scale in order to make the line drawn less abrupt and less brutal than it appeared. In his original Bill, in 1892, he had endeavoured to meet that. He looked upon 10s. as the limit, or as the minimum at which a man could keep body and soul together, and he said, "We will raise the income of a man to 10s. a week. We cannot afford to give him more than 5s. a week, but we will meet the difficulty in this way. If a man has 5s. a week of his own we will give him 5s. to raise his income to 10s. a week. If he has 6s., he will get 4s. to raise it to 10s., or if a man has 9s. he will get 1s. a week. That was a sliding scale which minimised to some extent the harshness and brutality of a straight line cutting off all after an income of 10s. a week. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer had the money at his disposal, he would be glad to see the limit extended so that with the pension of 5s. or less the total income might be 15s. a week. Men like his hon. friend the Member for Preston, who had been so devoted to the fetish of a dismal and unpopular science that even his tender nature had become hardened on this subject, said they did not like giving money in this way, because it would sap the character of the individual and discourage thrift; but that was mere pedantry as applied to men who had never had any opportunity of exercising thrift. He did not believe that the pension which he suggested would do the smallest harm to the character of the individual, or discourage thrift. Very few men of the labouring classes could save 10s. a week for themselves, or 10s. for their wives. They might be able to save 5s. for themselves, and 5s. for the old woman, which would give a pound a week between them. Therefore, a scheme such as this would rather help than discourage thrift, and the husband would be encouraged to save for both or, *vice versa*, if he were disabled, the wife might be able to do something. With modifications in that direction, he thought that the Bill might be made considerably better than it was. Now they came to another question, and that was with reference to the Poor Law. When he originally suggested a scheme of old-age pensions, he at that time disqualified people whenever they had received Poor Law relief at all. Afterwards he modified that opinion, and when in the Select Committee, of which the right hon. Member for Wimbledon was Chairman, they reported for disqualification in respect of the receipt of Poor Law relief twenty years previously, he divided the Committee, and suggested ten years. He thought there ought to be some restriction. A great many families surrendered early to the Poor Law system, and it was therefore desirable to have some kind of restriction. If the disqualification of Poor Law relief were to apply to only a year before the application for an old-age pension, then in many cases the relatives and others would endeavour to keep the applicant from coming under the system during that period in order that he might be in a position to claim the pension even although he had received relief for years previously. If a limit of five years were fixed as the period of disqualification it would strengthen the character of many people, and they would not be so ready to yield to the Poor Law system. This would not only save the rates, but it would encourage thrift. But the Government scheme would not do anything of that kind, because it only extended to twelve months previously, and as in that period the relatives would keep the applicant from the Poor Law relief little would be saved to the country, and not much done to add to strength of character or thrift. If there was any test or disqualification in respect of Poor Law relief it ought to extend to at least five previous years; and then it would have a beneficial effect, and also lessen to some extent the expenditure of the State. Experience in Denmark favoured this plan. His hon. friend opposite had put down five points with which he was sure many of them agreed, and which he would like to see adopted by the Amendment of the Bill in their direction; but he would give these words of counsel to hon. Gentlemen opposite, that they must get what they could. The Government had a certain amount of money which they could use for this purpose, and it was of no use their trying to double the amount required. The great thing was to get old-age pensions on the Statute-book as the first step to a much bigger scheme. He hoped that when the Government had passed this scheme through the House they would devote thought to the consideration of a contributory scheme. The cost of the present scheme would be £10,000,000 in three or four years, even on its narrow lines, and a few years later it would be £15,000,000, and, in another few years, even £20,000,000. They were putting a very big burden on the Exchequer, and he earnestly urged on the Government the duty of introducing a contributory scheme on the model of the German system—a contributory scheme which would give the younger generation not only an incentive to thrift but an opportunity of providing for their old age. Such a scheme introduced soon would provide for disablement and early pensions, and lessen the future demands on the State by enabling all younger people to secure provision for disablement and old age. He trusted the Bill would be generally supported by all sections of the House as a first step to a much bigger scheme of a contributory nature.

*MR. BLACK (Bedfordshire, Biggleswade) said the hon. Member for East Leeds had said that the Government Bill was absolutely worthless, but he wanted to remind the House that at any rate it provided for over 500,000 of the aged workers of this land. For his own part, he was delighted with the Bill. He regarded it as simply splendid to have such a beginning. During the last sixteen days he had had an opportunity of addressing ten meetings of agricultural labourers in the country, and he could inform the House that they regarded the proposal of the Government as an immense boon. He was grateful to the Government. He wanted to limit his observations to two points. While he welcomed the Bill he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would listen to the earnest appeal which he ventured to make to him to amend it in two particulars; first, in reference to the reduction of the pension where two or more persons were living together; and, secondly, in reference to the disqualification of the person who had received parish relief during the current year. These two points he regarded as serious blots on an otherwise admirable measure. They were aggravating limitations and would effect little real saving. The course proposed in the case of two persons living together in the same house seemed to be rather the peddling bargain of the petty trader—a penny each or two for three-halfpence. Why should such a limitation be made? Both these persons would need breakfast every morning and dinner when dinner time came.

The idea that two persons living together did not need the same as two persons living apart would not hold water. The number of persons over seventy years of age living together as man and wife or as maiden ladies could not possibly be very large. At the age of sixty-five he noticed the Prime Minister computed the number of such persons as 26 per cent. of the whole of the pensionable persons, but at the age of seventy he doubted if it would be more than 5 per cent. The saving, therefore, must be very small, and he asked the Government if it was worthy or worth while to make this limitation for so small a saving. Then as to the disqualification of persons receiving parish relief after 1st January of this year, he earnestly appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider whether he could not accept an Amendment substituting 1st October. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that those who had received parish relief and were disqualified thereby would be a vanishing quantity, and if that were so he urged him to let it go or to give people an opportunity by adopting his suggestion of qualifying during the current year. The moral gain would be very great and the cost would not be very heavy. Only on Saturday last he came across an agricultural labourer of eighty-five who had managed to scrape along on his own resources until two years ago, and he now received 2s. 6d. from the parish. As the Bill now stood this man's hopes of a pension were dashed to the ground. Was England so poor that she could not exchange the miserable pittance of the pauper for the pension of a citizen? It was possible that the number who could qualify in the three months he suggested would be very few, but however few he earnestly urged upon the Government that it would be worth while, and he hoped this small concession would be made.

*MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he rose to say a few words upon this Bill in the interest of the friendly societies and of those persons who had invested their earnings in them. Anyone who had taken an interest in the subject and had listened to the debate would agree with what had fallen from the hon. Member for Ilkeston and others that the cost of a universal pension scheme was quite outside possibility at present, and it could only exist as a visionary scheme upon our present financial basis. Not long ago at a Trade Union Congress in the North of England they unanimously came to the conclusion that it should be a universal scheme, and should cost £40,000,000, but they came also with great airiness to the conclusion, unanimously also, that the finding of the money was the Government's business and not theirs. The Government would find it an extremely difficult thing to provide the £6,000,000, let alone £40,000,000. There were many who regretted very much indeed the haste with which the Government had arrived at the conclusion that they must rule out any contributory scheme. A Bill of a very similar nature was introduced in May last, and the President of the Local Government Board said on that occasion that no other country, for instance, had the enormous network of friendly organisations that we had, and any scheme of old-age pensions must take into account these 28,000 separate organisations, with funds of £13,000,000, all of which made some provision for the halt and sick in the army of industry. If it must be so according to the President of the Local Government Board in 1907, why was it not so in 1908? Was it that the President of the Local Government Board had gone back to his original statement and had taken the rest of the Cabinet with him, and to the words which he used when in a position of greater freedom—that "thrift was invented by capitalist rogues to beguile fools to destruction"? It would appear as though that utterance had been adopted by the Cabinet, and the right hon. Gentleman had put on one side the views which he held so strongly only a year and a month ago. They could not discuss the contributory scheme, but at any rate they could ask of the Government: Why not exclude from the income-limit those pensions which were derived from money invested in friendly societies or in trade unions; because these were the result of exertion in earlier life, of work done, and of the thrifty character of the individual desirous of putting by something for the darker days of old age. The probable answer to this would be that it was not done in other countries. The reason why other countries did not supply a parallel case was because we alone of all countries had a larger network of friendly societies than any other, and therefore the argument as to what might be done in other countries did not apply. But this scheme was a hasty one. They had it from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was imperfect. Anyone could see that. But there was, to his mind, one grave objection to the Bill, an objection which he was sure would appeal to hon. Members opposite and below the gangway, viz., that the details were to be settled by regulations. He objected very strongly to the details of a measure of this sort being settled in a Government office without discussion in the House of Commons, and apparently there was to be no provision for discussion. The Government regulations were another step in the direction of benevolent autocracy. They might be good or bad, they might be too inquisitorial, but there was not to be even a draft of the regulations laid upon the Table, and they were to accept these details which were practically to govern the whole scheme. Something had been said about the temptation to make rash promises. Of course, a Bill of this sort would be a temptation to hon. Gentlemen when they went to their constituents to say, if returned, they would reduce the age-limit and give a larger sum per week. The Prime Minister, when Chancellor of the Exchequer introducing a Budget, said he avoided committing Parliament to a mortgage on the future resources of the country. But he had mortgaged very considerably the future resources of the country. In Denmark and New Zealand year by year the scheme had cost more. They could not raise a larger sum of money by increased taxation. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway would say: "Put taxes on the rich and let them pay for it," but if they taxed a man, however rich he was, another £50 or £100 in the course of the year, he had that amount of money less to spend, perhaps less to employ in labour, and therefore somebody suffered as well as the rich man himself. They were killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. But there was a blot on the Bill in the height of the age-limit and in the Poor Law disqualification. Few people really worked up to seventy. In the Civil Service persons were retired at sixty-five and sixty, and that was not nearly so severe as the manual labour which the agriculturists and workers in towns had to do. What was to happen to the workman who was unfit to work at sixty or sixty-five? If he had friends he could go and live with them, but it was by no means a certainty that they would be able to give him employment. If he had no friends, he had to go into the workhouse. He looked upon this scheme as being placed upon a most insecure basis, as not leading to the encouragement of thrift, but rather the reverse, as discouraging those who had saved money, and as placing rather a premium upon those persons who had done no work in their life and never intended to, but who now found that their future was safeguarded by the State.

MR. MADDISON (Burnley) reminded the hon. Member who had just sat down that the party to which he belonged during a period of good trade when there was a full Treasury—until it was emptied for the Boer War—did not make during its term of office a single legislative act to provide old-age pensions for anyone. The hon. Member for Kingswinford was afraid they were going to their constituents making rash promises. On that point the hon. Member spoke with a greater intimacy with rash promises, because for ten years the Unionist Party on election platforms made promises about old-age pensions which they had never fulfilled. He was surprised that the hon. Member had put in a plea for preferential treatment in regard to income derived from one or two particular sources such as trade unions and friendly societies. He had been a member of those societies ever since it was possible, and no one had a greater admiration for them than he had. But to suggest that those two bodies should be singled out for preference was really an astonishing thing to him. What about co-operative societies and building societies, and the man who belonged to any of these societies, who invested his little savings in his own house? Did the hon. Member suggest that thrift of that kind should be set aside?

MR. STAVELEY-HILL said he particularly excluded friendly societies and trade unionists and those persons who had put by money and invested it for their old age.

MR. MADDISON said that in that case there did not seem to be any point in what the hon. Member had said. He had been associated with Mr. Charles Booth's old-age pension scheme for many years, and there was not a man in England who was entitled to more credit for making old-age pensions possible than Mr. Charles Booth. Mr. Booth was a Conservative in politics and a cautious man belonging to the great trading class, who threw himself into this movement and spent money and time and health in social research of the most disinterested kind, and therefore when they were on the eve of seeing a legislative effort successfully launched they ought not to forget in this connection Mr. Charles Booth. He still adhered to the opinion that no old age pensions scheme could be water-tight and free from the criticism which could always be urged against any scheme. Mr. Charles Booth stood for a number of principles, but this was the first Government that had ever attempted to embody a large number of those principles in a Bill. Mr. Booth stood for non-contribution, that the pension should apply to men and women, and that it should be administered apart from the Poor Law, and those principles were in this Bill. He accepted the scheme whole-heartedly as a beginning, as applying to the necessitous and as an experiment; and because he realised that they must take this scheme within the four corners of the financial resources which they were told existed, he should refuse to vote for many Amendments which, were conditions more favourable, he would have felt himself called upon to support. After all, if they believed in old-age pensions, the most important thing was to get a beginning with them; whoever helped to get that beginning with them was a real friend, and those who jeopardised it were not friends of old-age pensions. The hon. Member for East Leeds had said that the number of people embraced in the scope of this Bill would include 75 per cent. of agricultural labourers. As an entirely town bred man himself he rejoiced very much at that.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle): Hear, hear.

MR. MADDISON said he was glad to hear the Chairman of the Labour Party express agreement with that statement. He was not anxious to go back to the land himself, but he was anxious to keep the right men on the land, and he thought there had been a great deal of sagacity shown in giving, as it were, a little advantage to the country. After all, the skilled artisan, though he never was blessed with too much wages, could in many cases make provision for old-age, and therefore they were on very safe lines in proceeding as the Bill suggested. He had listened with a good deal of interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Preston. It was a great speech, and there could be no question about it that it made some very valuable suggestions which a good many of them would ponder over. He could not, however, help thinking while his hon. friend was speaking that the words "contribution" and "compulsion" appeared to have an inseparable connection. None of them liked compulsion in anything. He accepted this scheme as an experiment, and to be perfectly candid he wished to say that he did not accept it in an apologetic way. There were one or two things which might have made the experiment more watertight and successful, and one of them undoubtedly was the question of Poor Law relief. He thought they ought to differentiate between outdoor and indoor relief. He thought, however, that the Government were wise in not in any sort of way including those persons in receipt of indoor relief. There were many obstacles in the way. There was the difficulty of finding people to look after the old people, and there was also the danger of their getting into the hands of persons who wanted the pensions and not the old people. On those grounds indoor relief might very well be ruled out. But as for outdoor relief that belonged to quite a different category. He had never been a guardian of the poor himself, but he understood that before Poor Law relief was given there was some security or guarantee that the applicant would be looked after and that his income would be supplemented in other ways; so that they had really the very conditions they wanted for an old-age pension. He had a striking case put to him in a letter which was unique in its way, and in which there was scarcely a word spelt correctly. He gave the letter to the President of the Local Government Board and he refused to give it him back again. It was a very pathetic letter. The writer had a wife and seven children and for nineteen years he had kept them and had also maintained his wife's mother. A month before this Bill was introduced the man gave way and was obliged to accept 2s. 6d. per week Poor Law relief. He understood that that person would be ruled out of the scheme for all time. He sincerely hoped that his interpretation of the Bill was incorrect, but if it was correct he hoped it would be altered, because that was just the sort of man who had made England what it was. He was the sort of man to be proud of, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War, who would probably reply, would not consider that this was a piece of sentiment. They were now on the hard bedrock of thrift, but in spite of that constituent of his he was going to support this scheme, although this one brave old soul would feel he had been wronged. At the same time the solid thing about this Bill was that they were getting a beginning. Some might say it ought to be made better here and there, and that improvements should be made in particular clauses, but the one abiding fact remained that on the 1st January next year, 500,000 people would be eligible for old-age pensions. The Bill provided for a beginning. The Government scheme might not be all that was wanted. It might work out badly. He was prepared to face that possibility. It might be that it would encourage the wastrel, weaken thrift, and demoralise the people. If it did so, it would have to go. He was not a sentimentalist. He wanted the thing to justify itself, and he did not apologise for its being a small beginning. He was willing to watch its working for a few years, and if it was a success, they would be quite free to extend it. In order that that watching should be carefully done it was necessary that the scheme should be made, within its scope, as perfect as possible.

Mr. MOND (Chester) said that they had had a debate rather at cross purposes. There had been not only the conflict between the Bill and the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Preston, but the speech they had had since from the hon. Member for East Leeds brought them into conflict upon consideration either of the Amendment or of the Bill. His hon. friend the Member for Preston in a long, eloquent, and impassioned speech, which he was sure impressed the House very much, contrasted to his mind not quite fairly the great advantages of the German contributory system with the proposed scheme of the Government. As one who had devoted some time to the study of the German system and who also had some acquaintance with it through friends in Germany, from the practical working point of view he could not say that he altogether shared the great enthusiasm of his hon. friend regarding it. There also he would like to point out that they seemed to be a little at cross purposes as to what they meant by a contributory system. Did they mean a system by which each individual insured his own pension, or a system by which a certain amount of taxation was directly contributed towards the general pension fund? He thought that point was of interest, because he, doubtless like many other Members, had received communications from friendly societies in his own constituency, and most of these communications favoured a contributory system. The contributory system which the friendly societies seemed to favour was that a 1d. on the £ of the wages should be taken as a tax, not towards any individual pension, but to pay for the present old-age pensions scheme. That was a contributory system if they liked, by ear-marking the payment for a certain purpose; but it was not the German system. The German system really consisted in opening a personal account for every insured person in the country, and at present they had 14,000,000 personal accounts in respect of persons between the ages of sixteen and seventy. They had week by week to trace the contribution of the employer and the employee, they had to keep every year forty-seven cards carefully registered and carefully stacked, they had to employ a horde of clerks in order to keep these accounts; and all this enormous machinery they set in motion to arrive at the remarkable result that the average pension which the German invalided man was to get was £7 19s. 6d., and the average old-age pension £7 19s. From the business point of view, and as a business man, it seemed to him they had an enormous complication for very little result indeed. If they examined the German system what did they find it amounted to? They found that out of the total amount contributed in the year 1905, the employers contributed £4,300,000, the insured contributed £4,300,000, the Imperial Treasury made a grant of £?,370,000, and the interest on the capital which they had accumulated contributed another £2,180,000, so that the total receipts were about £13,000,000, of which the insured contributed one-third. According to the hon. Member for Preston, the great difference between a scheme which had all the vices imaginable, like the Government scheme, and the German scheme, which he regarded as an ideal scheme, was that in the one case three-thirds was directly contributed from taxation, while in the other, two-thirds was contributed by the employer and the tax-payer, and one-third by the workman. He did not believe, himself, from his experience of workmen that their moral fibre was of such very small calibre that the question as between a contribution of one-third and nothing was going to make all the difference between pauperisation and thrift. He thought it was an absurd idea. He considered that the German scheme which had a number of good points was absolutely inapplicable to this country. He did not think we wanted compulsory contribution or an enormously elaborate scheme of administration which would cost a great deal of money. The German scheme was reported officially to cost £750,000 in administration. The total amount paid under that scheme in 1906 was £7,500,000, so that 10 per cent. went in administration in that economical country. But all the German penisons were paid out by the Post Office, and they charged the expenses in this Department, so far as he could make out, to the Post Office, and not to the old-age pensions fund. Then they had a further sort of expense. The employer had to keep one, two, three, or four clerks—in one case he knew of he had four clerks—occupied and doing nothing else but entering up these books, putting on these postage stamps at the end of every week, and seeing that all these things were kept in order. If they added all that up he thought it would be found that the cost of administration was probably nearer £1,500,000 than £750,000. And when they had finished all this they merely arrived by a very elaborate system at a very simple result. When giving people a pension, why not give it out of the general taxation of the country? They all contributed, they all paid taxation, why not give the pension in the simplest and least expensive form? That he thought was the best practical answer to his hon. friend's appeal to introduce the German system. He said the German system had other advantages. He maintained that it did away with many of the difficulties that they would meet with, but it did not. He said: "Look at your character test; how are you going to deal with that?" He quite overlooked the fact that in Germany they had a character test too. The German law provided that a person who had been contributing for forty years or so to the Pension Fund, had to go to the Pension Committee, and there he would find that the right to a pension did not extend to anyone who could be proved to have purposely made himself incapable, or whose incapacity was due to crime ascertained by judicial decision, such as drunkenness, sexual excess, and a whole number of other things. That opened out a nice field for an inquisitive committee. If they followed the thing up more closely they would find that they had an elaborate system of appeals from the original Pension Committee up to some High Court in Berlin, passing through a number of stages, with hundreds and thousands of disputed claims in spite of their contributory system. So that this country would be not worse off under the Government's proposal, but rather better off than they were. Parliament could not establish any system of old-age pensions that would not lead to a larger amount of difficulty. But the criticisms of his hon. friend the Member for Preston were the kind of theoretical criticisms which would stop them from ever doing anything in this world. They would never do anything in any branch of life if they were to sit down and work it out under a cast-iron rigid kind of logic, mingled occasionally with misapplied sentiment. That was not the way in which to try to work the practical affairs of the world. All those who had taken an interest in the question as employers—and nearly all large employers had to face the question one way or another—all those, he was sure, had a liking for the Government scheme. Some of them had tried to work this thing in their own concerns, but the difficulties were enormous. The difficulties for a private individual employer who attempted to carry out any kind of pension scheme were practically very great, and they were increased very largely by the fact that he could not afford to give pensions to people who came to him rather late in life. He was, therefore, put under the alternative of either only engaging young men or refusing to engage middle-aged men, or of giving a pension to workmen whose best years had been spent with some other firm which had turned them off. That was very unsatisfactory. A contributory scheme was also unsatisfactory to any private employer, because no private employer could ever guarantee absolutely to the workmen the continuance of his employment for an indefinite length of time. All these were points which in a State scheme of pensions were avoided. He did not suppose they were there to discuss finance, but he was perfectly certain, if money was wanted for these schemes, employers on the whole would be quite favourable to paying some kind of a tax on wages which would go towards helping to solve this question. In his view the employer had a most direct benefit in the work of his workman during his life, and, therefore, he would willingly give more than the ordinary taxpayer in order to see his workman decently well off in his old age. No employer with any feelings at all liked to feel that when his workman was getting old, he had no prospective alternative before him except the workhouse. The speech of his hon. friend the Member for Preston did not, he thought, bear very thorough examination. He certainly would not recommend this country from his experience—and the employers of Germany would very largely say the same thing, and he was certain the German working-men were by no means enamoured of their scheme—he would certainly not recommend this country to adopt the German system. We had had such a number of schemes proposed, schemes of the friendly societies and all kinds of schemes of that sort, and finally we had come down to what, after all, was a very simple scheme. On the scheme itself he would like to say one or two words. He was very glad the Government proposed an income limit, and he was also very glad they were doing something in regard to an industry test. He could not agree with the hon. Member for East Leeds and that school of thought which held that everybody ought to have a pension of 5s. a week at the age of seventy, whether he was a millionaire or not. After all, what was the whole fundamental idea of our pensions? Surely it ought to be in that great phrase in which Bismarck introduced the German Bill—

> "That the veterans of labour are entitled to a pension as much as the veterans of war."

Why did we want to give them pensions? Because they were past their best and no longer able to earn their living. Why should we want to give a pension of 5s. a week at the age of seventy to millionaires whom he would not name, who were quite as capable to-day in their offices in the city of earning their living as ever they were in their lives? The manual worker undoubtedly aged quicker than the mental worker, and, therefore, it might be reasonable to give him a pension. But the argument that they should not differentiate, and that they should give a Judge of the High Court who was drawing his £5,000 a year, or a millionaire in the city, who at seventy was quite as cute as he ever was in his life, a pension of 5s. a week, in order to satisfy some general principle that everybody should have pensions, was a thing he had never been able to understand. What was the advantage of an income-limit? It was that the pension should become lower and not higher. What they wanted to see was an increase in the prosperity of the country, and one of the things which stopped that was the enormous burden which the young generation had to carry on their shoulders for the support of the old. The rich should support the young, and the young should support the old. If the burden of life was taken from the young and they were given a full chance to do for themselves, in one or two generations the working classes in this country would not want a pension at all. He did not believe that the people of this country were particuliarly anxious to take money out of the pocket of the State, but preferred, if possible, to be independent. He knew many members of the Society of Engineers who would scorn to apply for a pension as long as they had a shilling in their pockets to bless themselves with. With a fixed limit of income the tendency would be for the pension not to grow higher, but to grow less. He questioned if the income-limit of 10s. a week was not too low; and he thought that they would not greatly increase the liability if they raised it to £52 a year, instead of £26. He thought some of the friendly societies' objections to the Government scheme were rather unreasonable. So far as his knowledge went, some of these societies did not pay pensions, but sick pay or superannuation allowances, which, however, did not go on for much more than twelve months. As a matter of fact it was the old members who became superannuated, and he understood that many of the friendly societies' so-called pension schemes were insolvent. Every Member knew the difficulty the friendly societies had in dealing with this question, and when the old men became superannuated they were often turned off the societies. No one would contribute to a Government scheme and also to a friendly society scheme for an old-age pension. On the other hand, he did not see why a working man should give up his friendly society from which he got a sick or superannuation benefit, although he did not get an old-age pension from it. Instead of opposing the Bill the friendly societies should be heartily in favour of it, because it would enable many of them to keep in existence who would otherwise have difficulty in carrying on. He was in favour not of a character test, but of an industry test. It might be a little difficult to apply, but he was perfectly convinced that if they allowed the wastrel, the well-known village drunkard, the recognised loafer, who was turned out of his union because of his chronic laziness, to come in with the men who had lived decent honest lives they would do a great deal of harm. He believed that if a vote of individual members of society were taken on the subject it would confirm his view, and that they would not give the benefit of a pension to those wastrels, drunkards, and loafers with whom they would not associate. He thought that the difficulty of the industry test was exaggerated, and if the clause in the Bill relating thereto was read in a common-sense way it would be found that the really honourable working men would not be excluded. In the same way he thought the difficulty of ascertaining whether a man had an income of 10s. a week, more or less, was exaggerated; and he hoped the Government would remain firm on these points. After all, they could only learn by experience; they should give a little at first, and increase it afterwards, for, a pension once given, it would be difficult to deprive a man of it. He believed that this Bill involved the most important issue they had had to consider since the House met. It would effect if not a revolution, at any rate an enormous change in the lives of millions of the people in the country. This certainty of obtaining a pension of even 5s. a week would be a ray of hope to them at the end of their lives; it would be something to work for. He had been informed by the Minister of the Interior in Germany that a small pension of 3s. a week had been an encouragement to men to save something, to lay by a nest egg to which they could cling in their old-age. So far from discouraging thrift, as many believed, this scheme would have the contrary effect, for men would feel that the additional 5s. a week to their savings would enable them to live in the evening of their days in comfort if not in luxury. Another thing was, as in Germany, pensioners would be encouraged to leave the city and go into the country where they could live more cheaply. It would make all the difference in the world to a man if he could live in a cottage in the country, and potter about a garden, instead of being imprisoned in a workhouse. If this Parliament could achieve that they should have accomplished the greatest social reform realised in this country since the time of Queen Elizabeth.

*MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said that there were many hon. Members who felt peculiar doubts as to what attitude they should adopt in regard to this measure. If they voted for it they would lay themselves open to the charge that they were in favour of imposing additional taxation on the country to the extent of £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 a year—a sum which could not be raised, he contended, under the present free trade system. On the other hand, if they voted against the Bill, they had to face the accusation that they were opposed to old-age pensions. That was their predicament. They supported old-age pensions because they believed the object was excellent and praiseworthy, and they desired to see a scheme adopted. At the same time they believed that the country could not safely adopt an old-age pension scheme without changing its fiscal policy. The Prime Minister was making great demands upon the county because he was asking the House to give him a blank cheque, the amount of which he was to fill in himself. The right hon. Gentleman told them that this was a temporary measure, that it was a first step towards a larger and more complete scheme; but he declined to tell them what that complete scheme was to be. The right hon. Gentleman informed them that the present scheme was to cost £6,000,000 or £7,000,000, but would not say what the ultimate cost would be; and when they asked him from what resources these £7,000 000 or £8,000,00 were to be drawn, he met them by saying that there were ample available resources under a free trade system. Could the House be placed in a more humiliating position? They were asked to consider a new and untried scheme. On the one hand, it dealt with the most vital social conditions of the country; on the the other hand, there was to be a great new imposition on the taxpayer, and they were left in the dark as to from whose pockets the cost was to come, and out of what resources it would be derived. The expediency of any great measure which went to the very foundation of our social fabric, and which made great demands on the taxpayers, could only be properly judged by balancing the benefits which one class of the community were to receive, against the sacrifices which the other classes of the community were to be called upon to make. Attempting to legislate in any other manner was fatal. How were they to judge of the wisdom of a scheme without knowing the damage which every class of the community was to suffer, and until they knew from what resources its cost was to be drawn? It was also impossible in these circumstances to pronounce on the merits of the Bill, or to analyse or discuss its details. The Prime Minister should give the electors of the country an opportunity of judging for themselves what the benefits of the scheme were likely to be, and what was to be its cost. Apart from its financial aspects, the Bill which the Prime Minister euphemistically said was the most liberal and generous scheme ever submitted by any Government to any Legislature in the world, and which the Chancellor of the Exchequer said was the most liberal and generous ever submitted to this House, was a bad one in its details for three reasons. It was a bad Bill, first, because it did not encourage the provident but inflicted conditions and provisions which would be clearly shown to be detrimental to thrift; it was a bad Bill, because by the rigorous and unnecessary tests it imposed it excluded from old-age pensions a very large number of those whom any such scheme should benefit and assist; lastly, it was a bad Bill, as he ventured to think, because it disturbed the economic equilibrium, for in attempting to relieve poverty, it offered a premium to old people to become poor and forced and subsidised those who wished to receive pensions to go into the market and compete at low wages with those who would not benefit by the old-age pension scheme. He had no doubt that the Bill when it came to be put into operation would do more harm than good and hurt the very class hon. Gentlemen opposite intended to benefit and assist. The Prime Minister, in his Budget speech, promised a Bill which was not to impose any disqualification except that of crime. His statement was perfectly clear and defined. The speech made on that occasion by the right hon. Gentleman might fairly be taken as an example of that clear reasoning, or clear thinking, which hon. Gentlemen opposite promised they would inaugurate when they came into power. But was there ever a more patent example of loose and careless legislation than the contrast between this Bill as it was presented to the House and the description of the Prime Minister of what it was to be? Instead of there being no tests the Bill bristled with the most rigorous tests. The right hon. Gentleman in his Budget speech said that all these suggested tests which looked so clear on paper, thrift, providence, good character, good repute, and so forth, when put into practical effect were not only extremely difficult to apply, but in their application were liable to produce cases of unwarrantable hardship. That statement when made was applauded by the House. No one doubted its truth or questioned its wisdom. But when the Bill was produced it was found to be full of the most cruel tests that it was possible for anybody to devise. Clause 3 of the Bill said a person should be disqualified—

> "If he has been brought into a position to apply for a pension through his own wilful act or misbehaviour."

By that test at least half of those who otherwise would be entitled to a pension might be disqualified. For instance, if a man happened to get drunk and was dismissed from his employment he had committed an act of misbehaviour, and would be barred from getting a pension. If an old woman arrived late at her employment by her own wilful act and she was dismissed, she had no claim on the pension fund. It was just these careless and improvident people who needed most assistance and relief, and it was possible that they were going to be disqualified because of a chance act of misbehaviour or wilful act committed years before. That was one test, but the other test in that subsection was quite as amazing. If a man, "before he becomes entitled to a pension" "has habitually refused to work or habitually refrained from working when he was physically able to work," he was disqualified for a pension. That might be an admirable provision if there was plenty of work for everybody; but unfortunately there was not, and the provision became a serious one. The obvious result would be to crowd the labour market with old people, eager to obtain pensions, begging for work and willing to accept any wages provided they did not exceed 10s. a week. By this Bill the wages and amount of employment that persons not entitled to pensions were now engaged in would be reduced. At the National Liberal Club recently the Prime Minister said that it would put 500,000 of our old folk, veterans of industry, entirely beyond the reach of pecuniary want. That might be true or it might not, but, assuming that it was true, whilst 500,000 of the veterans of industry would be relieved, a far greater number of people who were approaching the age of seventy would be injured. Of such persons there were nearly 1,000,000 who were between sixty and seventy. Hard as the other test was this test of refraining from work was infinitely harder. He asked himself whether the Prime Minister had forgotten his own speech, or whether he had not read the Bill. It appeared to him that the right hon. Gentleman thought there was plenty of work for all in this country, and all people had to do was to go to a street corner and find an employer ready to employ them; that all old people who refrained from work did so, not because they could not find employment, but because they were too idle or too proud to accept it. That test meant that all old people wishing to enjoy a pension must go out and find employment, no matter what the hours or the conditions were so that they did not earn more than 10s. a week. The result of such a policy would be to displace large numbers of people who were at the present time earning over 10s. a week and replace them by an equal number of people who, in order to obtain a pension, were willing to accept less than 10s., a change for which no doubt many of the employers would be grateful to the Liberal Party. The Prime Minister had changed his mind and had brought in a Bill which so much differed from the one outlined in his speech, for one reason and one reason alone. The right hon. Gentleman had miscalculated the cost of his original scheme, and had found the figure he had stated was far below what it would cost, and in order to safeguard his Budget he had subjected his Bill to all sorts of tests and conditions in order to reduce the number of claimants for the pensions. Only the other day the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted the inaccuracy of the right hon. Gentleman's figures. The Prime Minister put the cost of his original scheme at £6,000,000; the Chancellor of the Exchequer said subsequently that the scheme, as originally proposed, would cost £7,000,000, and to-day he had increased that figure to £7,500,000. If the cost of this Bill was revised, he ventured to say the figure would be found to be much below what the cost would be to the nation. Apart, however, from the question of tests, there was the question of system. The Government were to be congratulated that they had not adopted the German system, which would not be practicable in this country. The working man of this country would not submit to the system of dossiers and registration to which the German workman submitted. Some time ago he made some inquiries with regard to the German system, and had conversations with a German gentleman well versed in the social questions of Germany. That gentleman told him that the German system was popular with neither workman nor employer. The workman contended that he practically paid the whole cost, because, first of all, he paid his contribution; secondly, he paid his employer's contribution, because if the employer had not to pay it he could afford to pay a better wage; and, thirdly, by reason of its being raised by indirect taxation he paid the Government contribution. On the other hand, the employer said he paid, first, his own contribution; secondly, that of his workmen, because if they had not to pay so much a week out of their wages they would take a smaller wage; and, thirdly, inasmuch as the Government contribution was raised by a tax which fell on industries, he paid that also; and thus he paid the whole. That showed the different views of the German employer and workman on this scheme, which was unpopular with both. He ventured to think that a contributory scheme based on the German model would be equally unpopular in this country. While a contributory scheme might be thought necessary for promoting thrift, at the same time he was of opinion that a Bill might have been framed on lines which, though not contributory, would not have discouraged thrift as this Bill did. A man who paid his surplus earnings week by week into a friendly society or trade union, and whose pension from that society, together with his wages, amounted to more than 10s. a week, was to be disqualified for a pension under this Bill. If, on the other hand, he had spent his surplus on pleasure, he was open to obtain a pension from a generous and free-handed nation. He ventured to think the scheme, if carried through in the form in which it was brought forward—and he was glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer say he was willing to make concessions with regard to the fixed income-limit of 10s.—would deal a death blow to the friendly societies. Who would pay money into a friendly society if he knew that he would be disqualified ultimately by the pension he would receive from it for receiving the pension from the State? Most of them on that side of the House would regard any sound scheme of old-age pensions as an ideal worth aiming at, and they did not deny that public opinion demanded that the question should be now dealt with and settled. Their act on had been perfectly consistent. For many years they had declared that old-age pensions were a desirable object, but, after taking the most careful and competent advice, they had declined to commit the taxpayers of the country to the very great expenditure until they saw, at all events, some immediate promise of the broadening of the basis of taxation. They had resisted the temptation of a possible temporary popularity at the expense of the taxpayers, because they believed, and continued to believe, that under the present system of taxation we had no available sources from which this annual and great sum could be derived without causing an immense amount of damage. They supported old-age pensions, but they did not believe that the country could permanently find the amount of revenue necessary without changing its fiscal system, and they asserted that, if this Bill became law, a change in our fiscal system would become inevitable.

*MR. J.W. TAYLOR (Durham, Chester-le-Street) said he was very pleased to hear that the party on his right had been so consistent in their attitude. They confessed they were willing to grant old-age pensions if the basis of taxation was broadened and a greater charge was therefore put upon the ordinary working man; but the Labour Party were not going to have old-age pensions in that way. The Bill initiated a new epoch in our national life, and, like all new epochs, created a certain amount of criticism. There was the frankly hostile criticism and the friendly criticism. Some of them believed the Government were in earnest and desired, as far as they possibly could, to relieve the deep necessities of the aged poor. On the other hand, there were those who told them that the Government were simply dangling the carrot before the donkey's nose and leading the people to believe they would give them something which they would never get. Some, too, characterised the Government as a vote-hunting Government and said they were pressing on their followers some of the most obnoxious provisions contained in the Bill and that their followers were in deep revolt against the attempt. It might be true that there were in the Bill a few provisions with which perhaps they could not all agree, but they on that side of the House had no desire either unduly to criticise the Government or to complain about the main principle of the Bill. They believed the Government intended well, though they would rather they had put before them a Bill less conjectural, and the financial outlook of which was, at least, more secure. They looked to this Government of high pretence and great professions with hope and expectation to bring them within reach, at least, of a comprehensive scheme of old-age pensions. They demanded such pensions as a civil right and claimed that they ough to be granted to all old people. If they could not get a comprehensive scheme from this Radical Government with all its great promises and pretences—from this Government which they called the green tree—what were they to expect from the dry tree? They believed earnestly and faithfully that the Government intended well, but there was, he believed, an old element of moral science that intention often meant more than action itself. What they would like was that the intentions and the actions of the Government should be in closer relationship than they were according to the Bill. The age-limit had been spoken of, and seventy years was far too high. Very few of them, no matter on which side of the House they sat, could agree to an age-limit of seventy years. The wage-earners began work at the very earliest opportunity and declined early in life on that account. It could not be denied that the manual labourers died more rapidly than the professional classes. Six only out of every thousand railway workers were left at the age of sixty-five; fifteen out of every thousand boiler-makers; sixteen out of every thousand engaged in the glass-making industry; twenty-four out of every thousand gas-workers; sixteen out of every thousand miners; and twenty-seven out of every thousand dockers and seamen. Surely they could not agree that the age of seventy was anything like a fair limit to fix for old-age pensions. One section of the Bill—Clause 3, section (b),—dealt with the man who had been brought into a position to apply for a pension through his own wilful act, or misbehaviour. They meant to have some further enlightenment with regard to that section. What was meant by that particular phraseology, and over what period did the disqualification extend? He thought they ought to have some enlightenment upon these points. Was there to be an inquisition by the Pension Committee or by the Pension officer? Was the whole past of a man's life to be raked up against him? If so, were they to conclude that the worst features of our Poor Law system were to remain in connection with this Bill? Surely that could not be defended by a

Government with such Radical tendencies as the present Government? The Prime Minister had said that the less they went into this question of character short of absolute conviction for crime the better. All those suggested tests which looked so well on paper—thrift, prudence, good repute, etc.—when put into concrete shape were not only difficult to apply, but, in their application, produced cases of unwarrantable hardship. Surely in the light of that statement, it could not be the intention of the Government to keep this most obnoxious section in the Bill. Whatever might be done with regard to the financial limitations and restrictions of the Bill, they at least believed that this error would be corrected. It violated the true principle of those who inspired the idea of old-age pensions. They knew how strong was the disposition to condemn the thriftless and how frequently it was sought to encourage the thrifty, but there was sometimes a very narrow margin between thrift and greed. Men characterised as thriftless were in some cases led by their good nature to spend their surpluses not upon themselves perhaps, but often upon others and some spent their money upon themselves and then in the end they would cringe and fawn for the old-age pension. He would far sooner give old-age pensions to the man with a generous heart than to those who simply clutched it by their greed. The question with them was not so much that they were true-hearted men. There were some men who had got down. The point with the House should be how they could get them up, and if they were to be subject to the disqualification of this particular section they kept them down. He did not care whether they took it on the moral or religious ground there was the point. It was not their duty to inquire so much about the fall of the man but how to raise him to a higher standard. Having said that he trusted they would not be classed among the few opponents of the Prime Minister whom he euphemistically called stray and benighted fanatics. They wanted to see the Bill succeed, and they were anxious that the Government should pay some attention to what they considered to be defects in the Bill, and hoped the time was not far distant when by the help of the present Chancellor they would have a universal system of old-age pensions.

*EARL OF KERRY (Derbyshire, W.) asked for the indulgence of the House in addressing it for the first time on a question of such difficulty and complexity. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had given a warning which might be applicable to a young Member like himself, as to the great changes of opinion which had taken place on this question since the idea was first started some ten years ago, and, therefore, perhaps one should not speak about it without first-hand information of all that had taken place in previous Parliaments. He was heartily in sympathy with the Amendment, and was in sympathy with it before he heard the able and decisive way in which it was moved. He supposed the objects they had in view were common to Members sitting on both sides of the House—they all desired to alleviate as far as possible the lot of the old and deserving poor, but would it not also be true to say that they desired to do so in such a manner as not to assist the undeserving at the expense of the deserving, and also that they wished to do so without putting any undue financial burden on the British taxpayer? The Bill before the House, although it attempted by a system of limitations to keep clear of the first of these pitfalls, was foredoomed to failure in that respect. These discriminations and limitations in the course of time, late if not soon, must go, and therefore the Bill would fail in the second respect and would become financially too burdensome for the country to bear. To quote the words used by the Prime Minister in relation to a universal scheme, it would place itself outside the range of practical politics by putting on the nation an obviously prohibitive burden. If that was so the only alternative before those who wished to help the aged poor lay in the direction of a scheme such as that which had been foreshadowed by the hon. Member who moved the Amendment. They had been twitted with the fact that when in power they did nothing to carry into effect a system of old-age pensions. On reading the Reports of the various Committees and Commissions from 1893 to 1903 it seemed pretty clear that most of them were destructive of all the schemes that had been brought before them. There was one notable exception, the Report of 1899, and that scheme, as he understood, was in its essentials adopted by the Government, but there appeared to be important respects in which the present scheme differed from that scheme, namely, in the disqualifying period for the receipt of Poor Law relief, being twenty years instead of one year, in the thrift clause, which was very much more stringent in the Report of 1899, and, lastly, in the fact that the source from which the pensions were mainly to be drawn was the rates and in a secondary degree only were they to come from Imperial taxation. These three differences constituted a very important qualification in the claim that this scheme was the one adopted by the present Government, for everyone of them in a different way certainly tended to promote economy in the working of the scheme, and they, at all events, collectively gave the scheme a more economical starting point than that of the present Bill. The Government, he supposed, had learnt from the experience of their predecessors that relief given from the Imperial Exchequer was less burdensome and less unpopular than relief given from the rates, if one might draw a parallel between the aged and deserving poor, and the voluntary schools which were in most cases aged, and in some cases, as it would perhaps be admitted even by hon. Gentlemen opposite, deserving. In this respect at all events the Government were entitled to the claim of consistency. At the same time many of them would rather have seen part of the cost, at all events, put on the rates, so that, to use the words of the Committee of 1899, the principle might be preserved that—

> "It is essential that the authority granting the pension shall be the authority which finds the means."

That was one thing which would, at all events, have tended to economy, and prevented the scheme getting beyond the capability of the country to bear it. The Prime Minister in bringing in the scheme had announced that it was one of extreme simplicity. He hoped he was not an unduly carping critic, but to some of them, at all events, the scheme did not appear to warrant such a description. It was only face simplicity. It started with the assumption that old-age pensions should be given to everyone over the age of seventy, but when they came to consider the limitations, and the way in which they would work, one could hardly say it was really a simple measure—the age limitation, the amount of the pension, the income limit, the expectation of income as well as actual income, the receipt of poor relief, and, lastly, the thrift or character clause. Also the question of the machinery for the administration of the Act could scarcely work out in a simple manner when one considered the constitution of the pension committees which were to have the allocation of the pensions, without any responsibility as to the sources from which the pensions came. Possibly some might show undue severity, but more probably there would be a kindly disposition shown, and the benefit of the doubt would be given even in cases where the recipients were not really worthy of receiving State pensions. The limitations might be financially excellent, but when it came to the administrative side they would be unworkable. They would be both unjust and inquisitorial. If that was so they would prove untenable. The cost would in time become obviously prohibitive, but by that time the Government would be unable to repudiate it, and the money would have to be found somehow or other for the working of the scheme. As to the source from which the funds would be raised it had been claimed that it rested on a solid financial foundation, and they were told that the Bill was not brought in last year because that foundation was not then apparent. To most of them he did not think that that solid foundation was even now apparent. If modified in the future, it could only be in the direction of giving greater facilities for the receipt of pensions. The phrases which had been used by Ministers themselves, such as that "this was no more than a beginning," that "it was capable of development," and the merit of "elasticity" claimed for it by the Chancellor of the Exchequer all pointed to the fact that the scheme as now presented would not be the scheme which would be in force five or ten years hence. If this was only the beginning they wanted to know what were the further stages of this experiment and where the money was to come from. It was for those reasons that he desired to advocate some form of a contributory scheme. He confessed that he did not know, until he heard it from the hon. Member for Preston, how the scheme worked in Germany. It seemed to him that the explanation which the hon. Member had given of it must be absolutely satisfactory to anyone wishing to try such a scheme in this country. He did not bind himself to any particular form of scheme, but only to the principle that any scheme of old-age pensions should be contributory and not such a plan as that which had been brought in by the Government. The advantage of a contributory scheme was that it supplied an automatic test of thrift and character without any inquisitorial methods and this was, *ipso facto*, arranged for by the system of only giving a pension when the person had paid something towards it. Of course all would admit the difficulties which were attendant upon a scheme of that nature, but he submitted that those difficulties were not so great as those which appeared in the scheme put forward by the Government. The objection which had been raised to a contributory scheme was that the recipients would not get any benefit for twenty or thirty years. He thought that objection had already been blown to the winds by the speech of the hon. Member for Preston, who had pointed out that the 126,000 pensioners in Germany was not an accurate figure and that the proper total should be much nearer 1,000,000. Then there was the other argument as to the hostility of trade unions and friendly societies. To all appearances the present Bill had already incurred the hostility of friendly societies and trade unions. And lastly it was said that they had not got the machinery to carry such a measure into effect, and that such machinery would be very expensive. Surely it would be much cheaper to have a contributory scheme of pensions with expensive machinery than to have an ever increasing non-contributory system with a cheaper machinery. In any non-contributory scheme there must always be a large number of extremely hard cases. It did not matter whether they lowered the age limit, raised the income limit, or generally changed the limitations of the discriminatory provisions of the Bill, they would always get some hard cases. Naturally, the man who got a pension would be 5s. a week better off than the man who got nothing at all, just as a man who got half a loaf was better off than a man who got no bread. This question would be judged by a man not so much in relation to what had gone before but in regard to what his next-door neighbour was getting. The question was one of the expectancy raised by a system of subsidies such as that which was now advocated, and in his opinion that expectancy would cause in some measure the growth of necessity. He could not see that there was any just or logical half-way house btween a non-contributory system and a universal system. Therefore he should cordially support the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Preston. He thanked the House for listening to him so patiently.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): From this bench we have listened with pleasure to the maiden speech of the noble Lord who has just resumed his seat. He is the representative of a family of which generation after generation have been distinguished in British politics, and I think that the new generation promises not to break the continuity. I can promise him that, although he has criticised the policy of the Government severely, nevertheless, whenever he speaks with that fairness of tone and legitimacy of criticism which he has shown to-night, we shall listen to him with the greatest pleasure. The noble Lord referred to the Committee of 1899 and to the Member for Wimbledon, who was its chairman. That right hon. Gentleman addressed us earlier. He insisted somewhat strongly upon the incompatibility of any scheme of pensions such as that embodied in this Bill with the policy of encouraging thrift. When one looks to the Report of the Committee over which the right hon. Gentleman presided, one finds that it advocated a scheme—the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the colleague of the right hon. Gentleman in recommending it—which was almost identical with this one, except that the pensions began at sixty-five, that the tests were somewhat more stringent than in the present case, and that the pension was partly met out of the rates. The right hon. Gentleman and his Committee ruled out every scheme of contributory pensions of the kind of which we have heard so much to-night. They had plans for contributory pensions before them, but all these they said did not touch or meet the real point. I think in those days the right hon. Gentleman showed a more just appreciation of the real question which is before the country than he has shown in his speech to-day. Contributory systems are no good for the purpose which we have, and must have, in view at the present time. They do not assist the class we have in mind; not do they come into operation till after a generation has elapsed, and their utility has been deferred. [Indications of dissent.] It is obvious that a contributory system must be deferred. What we have before us to-night is a plan which has been subjected to criticism from two divergent points of view. The one criticism affirms that a system of pensions provided by the State cannot be good because it discourages thrift; the other that the clauses of the Bill are too stringent, and shut out many people whom the system ought to help. But I cannot help thinking that both these forms of criticism ignore the real policy underlying this Bill. The Prime Minister made it perfectly clear in his Budget speech what that policy is. The Bill does not profess to cover the whole ground. The Bill does not profess to introduce any new principle. It recognises that since the days of Queen Elizabeth, and perhaps earlier, there has been as part of the accepted law of the land an obligation on those who are prosperous to assist in the provision for the necessitous. That is the principle of the British Poor Law. That principle is embodied in the system which exists now, and is recognised in the policy of this Bill as an old principle which we desire to carry out and adapt to modern circumstances. All this Bill does is to deal with the necessities of the class requiring relief. The Prime Minister, in his speech, said explicitly, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer said even in more detail to-day, that the Bill was based on a general classification of those who require assistance from the State and deals only with that section that comes within that classification. The Prime Minister explained that the question of pensions was one of a group of questions the solution of which must form a single system and be based on a classification in accordance with a definite principle. The Government is necessarily hampered in dealing with this matter at the present moment, because it is in this dilemma. The whole field of the Poor Law is being reviewed by a very powerful Commission, presided over by a statesman of immense administrative experience, in whom great confidence is felt, and that Commission has in it some of the most distinguished experts in the country. It is reviewing the whole field of Poor Law legislation. We do not know what its conclusions may be. It is difficult to suppose that those conclusions will not embrace the classification of those who are receiving and ought to receive relief from the State more complete and more thoroughgoing than what exists; but we do not know what its conclusions will be. Therefore, if we had been in a position to do so we should have been glad to defer action until we had the whole of the Report of the Commission before us, that we might consider it and see whether we agreed with it or not. But that might have meant putting it off for a year or two years of valuable time, and the pressure on this Parliament is such that we felt that we should not be justified in making that delay if we could see clearly that there was a section of the whole problem with which we could deal. In other words, this pension scheme is a part of a very much larger class of reforms which the Government is contemplating, and which forms part of the settled policy of the Government. The pension scheme must necessarily be to a certain extent provisional and tentative. It is to be fitted into something wider and more complicated hereafter. It is perfectly clear there cannot be a universal system on the footing of forming part of a larger whole, nor can there be a contributory scheme, because it is an extension of the system of the Poor Law. On the other hand, it is equally clear that there is a class with which it deals out of a number of classes, and the limits of that class must be defined and made clear by tests or distinctions in such a fashion as would prevent overlapping in modes of treatment. Having said that, I think some light is thrown on the meaning of Section 3, subsection 1, which contains the words "until Parliament otherwise determines." The reason is that we know hereafter that we shall have to review the entire Poor Law system, and we propose to fit this into the larger work which will come hereafter, and for that purpose what we need is to determine on settled principles, and to hold firm to them. Now, a good deal of discussion to-night has proceeded on the footing that some new and great departure was being made in public expenditure. Well, I have been interested in this matter for a long time, and I have looked with some care into the nature and character of the expenditure. It falls on the rates, and also on the taxes. For England and Wales, according to the last statistics available, the money expended on the relief of the poor was something like £14,000,000. For Ireland and Scotland it amounted to something like £18,000,000. But there is another class of expenditure which comes under the head of public health extending so far as concerns the benefit to the individual, and in connection with that immense branch of expenditure amounting to about £31,000,000, out of rates and taxes, which goes for a variety of purposes, it is not, as far as I can judge, an estimate that is far wrong to take from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000 as money spent on those who are necessitous; and if you add that £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 to £18,000,000, you get an expenditure of £22,000,000 to £23,000,000 on those to assist whom the State recognises its obligations. If that is so, what do you propose to do? Simply to bring in another section to make the whole system complete. It is a comparatively small matter, the completion of the edifice, three parts of which and more are erected. But the whole of this edifice requires revision and reconstruction, and until that is done, the limit of what one may call the assistance of the necessitous class cannot be finally ascertained. Before 1834 the Poor Law was in a most unsatisfactory condition. There was no check upon expenditure. The poor rates were a mode of supplementing wages. Then came the measure of 1834—a most valuable measure. I do not hesitate to say it was absolutely essential at that time, but it does not follow now that the Act has been in existence for seventy-five years that the time has not come for a complete revision. You want a deterrent policy, joined to which there must be a certain amount of degradation, I mean for the class which is idle, which is parasitic, which depends upon what it can get out of the better-off class, which makes no effort to assist itself, what has been called the wastrel class. This class has to be dealt with by the quasi-penal policy, and is so dealt with in all countries where a more enlightened system of Poor Law has been adopted. But you have to distinguish another class, an unfortunate class, which under the system of 1834 was lumped in with the other, those men who through no fault of their own are condemned to poverty, and by that law are condemned to the workhouse with the less deserving class. It comes to this, that a further sifting is necessary, in which the deterrent principle may be accompanied by something which goes further, a principle which seeks not merely to deter, but to cure. The helpless, the sick, the insane, the children who are not looked after by their parents, these are the subjects for a curative policy, and ought to be treated in institutions wholly different. But when you have dealt with these there is still a class who are not sick, who are not helpless in the ordinary sense, who have worked perhaps very hard, but have never been able, owing to the conditions of society, to make the savings which are necessary as a provision for old age. These are the people we mark off as not proper subjects for curative treatment, but proper subjects for that aid which the State owes to those who have deserved well of their country. This class we mark off and separate from the others. How the Poor Law Commission may classify them we do not know. I should think, but I do not know, that the basis will be a form of classification more minute than the present, a system based on some such principles as I have indicated. If so, there must be a distributing authority appointed by the State to relegate individuals to the kind of relief they need, and you will have different classes of institutions to which individuals will be relegated. There will be the workhouse on the penal side, and, on the non-penal side, schools, hospitals, employment agencies, poorhouses as distinguished from workhouses, and asylums for the aged and sick, and, finally, there is the third class, indoor or outdoor, who have to be put on a different footing and treatment by the State, and who through no fault of their own cannot maintain themselves in their old age. The Poor Law has changed a good deal since 1834 and though no such classification or separation has been formally adopted, yet the Poor Law of to-day has grown into something very different from what it was in 1834. Within four years, I think it was, after the system came into existence, it was recognised that a vast amount of poverty was due to preventible disease, and there grew up a ublic healthy system within the Poor Law which had for its object the stamping out and prevention of the spread of disease. That developed into assistance to the needy and necessitous and took the form of a new class of service devoted, not merely to relief of the poor, but to prevention of some of the causes of poverty. Now, characteristically, we let that grow up in this country in a most vague and confused fashion, and we have to-day our medical officers of health belonging to the public health system on the preventive side of the Poor Law under one set of authorities, such as town councils, and we have another set of officers of health under the direction of boards of guardians who in most cases act only on requisition after the relieving officers have done their work. The result is an enormous amount of over-lapping. I have been looking into the figures and I find that the services performed in the name of public health include a vast variety of items within the administration of guardians and public health authorities. Included in the list are hospitals, health-visiting, infectious disease hospitals, outdoor medical relief, Poor Law infirmary sick wards and so on. Seven or eight millions of money is spent out of the rates alone on these things, in a fashion which beyond question involves an immense amount of waste. In our present system in almost every direction there is overlapping and consequent waste of money. All that belongs to the £22,000,000 of existing expenditure of which I have spoken, and I cannot help entertaining a strong hope that the Royal Commission will find there are means which we can readily adopt for sifting out and distributing the functions of the various authorities whereby we can not only reach the subject of them much more effectively but can make available a large amount of public money which is at present wasted. If that be so, then classification, which is of the essence of this Bill, is something which ought to be of real value and effect upon the whole field which is sought to be covered. Instead of the system of 1834, which lumped together the deserving and the undeserving, and inflicted the stigma of the workhouse upon the children born there and who are wholly innocent, instead of that horrible system, which has been from time to time, I think, weighing more heavily upon the public conscience, we seem to be reaching a point after three-quarters of a century at which a general revision and overhauling of the system is becoming inevitable, and, if it is becoming inevitable, then those who we desire to assist, who, through no fault of their own, have not been able to save, ought to be marked off from the other class of which I have spoken. They are the subjects and proper subjects for this Bill. Such a classification is not novel. It has been put into force more or less perfectly in other countries. We have heard a great deal to-day of the systems of Denmark and Germany. The case of Germany is very instructive, because the German system is by no means the thorough-going or completely scientific system that you would expect. The objection we have has been made perfectly clear in this debate. The contributory system of pensions which the German Government laid down is not in any way similar to that proposed in this Bill. It is a system for assisting those who are capable, to a considerable extent, of self-help, and it does not reach those whom we hope to reach by this Bill, nor does it contribute to the relief of those who seek Poor Law relief in this country. In Germany there is a very remarkable tendency to classify those who need State assistance, and to classify them under conditions that vary from locality to locality. In Berlin you find one, a very perfect system, and in Leipzig quite another. There you have voluntary effort to a large extent. Definite tasks are set to the voluntary relief committees who help the officials, who are at work at everything in that country, to come to a general decision as to the classification of those dealt with. The tramp in the best organised parts of Germany hardly exists. He is at once classified, taken up and relegated to a house of detention, where he is compelled to work, and his wages are saved up for him to give him a fresh start when he redeems himself. If he is a man who is not an ordinary tramp but a man who has been unable to obtain work, an endeavour is made to find work for him. Sometimes the man is there through physical weakness, and that case is dealt with. There is a complete classification and distribution of cases such as is unknown in this country. But though in Germany this classification exists, the most perfect system is the one in operation in Denmark, passed in 1891, and I should like to refer to it for a moment, because it is an admirable illustration of what can be done in the way of pension schemes fitted on to a system of classification. There the classification divides those who need relief into two classes—those who get relieved in meritorious old age, and paupers who have more or less come into that position through their own fault and who are relieved in the ordinary way. The two are dealt with in widely distinct fashions. The aged person who gets a pension is treated as having decreasing capacity to work, and the pension, which begins at sixty, increases up to seventy-five. The relief given him may be in the form of admission to an old-age home, where he is treated with care and humanity, and even given a certain amount of luxury. The pauper is classified on an entirely different footing. The respectable poor are treated in one set of institutions, and the disreputable poor in a different sort, and the whole matter is run so closely that the variety of classes is very great. Denmark, at any rate, has illustrated the possibility of making a complete survey of that section of the population that requires assistance. It also shows that there may be a very considerable saving—I do not mean of total expenditure, because that is more than under the old system, but a considerable waste of money is avoided. Our policy frankly says that the Bill is not in itself complete. It deals with a section, the class of persons who are to be assisted, subject to tests which are essential. There must be discrimination in order to mark off the class. It is to be neither the whole of the population as under a general system, nor a section of the population as under a contributory system; but a defined class which is unable to provide for itself through no fault or misfortune of its own. You must, as we have a Poor Law system existing at the present time, in the first instance work off sharply the pauper class, and the Bill therefore provides, until Parliament shall otherwise determine, that those who are in receipt of parochial relief on 1st January 1908, shall not come under the scheme. That is a working provision which constitutes a provisional class to be dealt with as such until the larger reform of the whole matter comes, possibly presently, and enables Parliament to survey and distribute the whole field in the fashion of which I have been speaking. It is, of course, impossible, in the absence of the evidence the Royal Commission has taken, and in the absence of the light and guidance which the Report of the Commission must give, to predict what form the classification will take. I think one may assume that there is bound to be some classification by which the various classes needing State assistance are treated in old age and poverty, without the harshness which inevitably arises when you have every class of poor mixed up in workhouses as under the present system, and that when that classification is completed the pension section will fit in its proper place. When that is done, the stigma which attaches to the giving of Poor Law relief will to a great extent have been reserved for a much smaller and narrower class than at the present time, and the Poor Law system as we know it to-day will have disappeared into a number of other forms of relief which will have grown out of it. Before that can be done, an immense amount of ground has to be traversed. There is an enormous mass of statutes from the time of Queen Elizabeth, and owing perhaps their most intricate features to what has happened between 1834 and the present day, which has to be surveyed and put into shape. Order has to be brought out of chaos, and that is only possible if a clear purpose and definite principles are kept in view throughout. It will be essential to make what will be in effect a wholly new system, a system using existing authorities and disturbing as little as possible existing areas, but a system which assigns to the different institutions which exist their proper and not their improper work, and which prevents the work of those institutions overlapping as they do at present. When that has been accomplished, we shall be in a position to review the pension law which this Bill proposes to constitute; though I do not mean that it will in any very large degree be necessarily departed from. It may well be that those between sixty and seventy may be assisted on some such sliding scale as the Danish system, or it may be they will be dealt with in some other fashion; but we cannot go wrong in assuming that those over seventy who are deserving and of meritorious character will be assisted in very much the fashion proposed by the Bill. What we are doing is to take a section with which, beyond all question, we shall have to deal very much in the fashion which the Bill contemplates. I am quite aware that it is inevitable in such a situation that there should be a certain amount of obscurity. My right hon. friend the Prime Minister has been charged with having put into the Bill something different from what he said in his Budget speech. He has done nothing of the sort. If you compare what my right hon. friend has said with what is in the Bill in the light of the general system, of which this pension scheme forms only one part, it is abundantly plain that those restrictions and conditions put in the Bill are put in because it is absolutely necessary to mark off the section of the larger whole with which you are dealing in a tentative fashion. We stand to-day in this position. We are bringing in a measure which is not complete in itself and which is not intended to be complete in itself. It is the first step in a journey which may be long and which may require more Parliaments than one to traverse, but which, as a Government, we feel it is our bounden duty to enter upon. I know no noble work than the survey of this whole field and a resolute attempt at trying to do for that immense class in this country who present so mournful a spectacle what they cannot do for themselves. The work of this Parliament and this Government would not have been complete had we not made such an effort as was in our power to make to deal with as much of this great problem as we could compass. The whole we cannot compass. The materials are not yet in our hands. Nevertheless, it is our clear and bounden duty to lay hold as firmly as we can of the part of the problem with which we can deal, and this Bill represents an attempt, made under circumstances however difficult, to solve the problem which lies before us.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): The right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has referred to the accusation made against the Prime Minister that he has put into the Bill what was not in his Budget speech. The right hon. Gentleman himself has put into his speech what is not in the Bill and what has nothing on earth to do with it. We have been treated by the Secretary for War to an extremely interesting historical survey of local government in this country, but it would have been more valuable had it been historically a little more correct. There is no doubt that the Secretary for War has put this Bill on a totally different footing from that on which it has been placed either by the

Prime Minister in his original speech or by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech this afternoon. The Bill has been debated hitherto, and has found support only because it was regarded as an instalment of a great reform which was going to give stability, independence, and comfort to the poorer classes. But that is not the view of the Secretary for War. He has told us that this Bill is merely an enactment in 1908 of a reform or amendment of a great Statute of Elizabeth upon which rest the Poor Laws of this country. The Secretary for War is one of the most learned Members of the House, but in his endeavour to turn the Army of this country into the Territorials, he has not had time to remember that the statute of Elizabeth was passed, not in order to enable honest and industrious men who could not get work or food or roofs to cover them to get assistance, but to find employment for those who were not unable but unwilling to work. The origin of that statute was that where a person was destitute from mis-misfortune it was the bounden duty of the law to feed, clothe, and cover him with a roof. If he was unwilling to work, he should be forced to work—not be given the right to work, which is the modern demand, but given work he did not want to do. Is that the foundation upon which this new statute is to rest? Is that to be the origin of your new pension system? The Secretary of State shakes his head. I appeal to the memory of the House whether the right hon. Gentleman did not tell us there was nothing new in this. It found its origin and its foundation in the Statute of Elizabeth. When the right hon. Gentleman comes to the principle of the measure, I will not stop to debate the point with him, because ever since it was introduced I have been trying to discover the principle, so far without success. But I will take the Government view of the principle. If there is a principle in the measure, I take it it is the establishment of a system of pensions by which everybody shall, without any contribution of his own, draw from the State funds a small income. Where does the Secretary of State find that principle enshrined in the Act of Elizabeth? That Act only says that there shall be protection given to those who cannot afford to clothe and protect themselves. There is no analogy to be found between the principle of the Act of Elizabeth and the so-called principle of this Bill. But the Secretary of State went further than that. He told us the Government would have been glad if they could have accompanied the reform of the Poor Law with this reform, and in his eloquent peroration he appealed to the House, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done earlier in the evening, to accept the Bill with all its shortcomings, its failings and faults, many of which have been exposed by almost every speaker who has taken part in the debate, except those who have spoken from the Government Bench, because it would do something to bring happiness and comfort to the suffering poor of the country. A more inappropriate description of a Bill was never given by its authors in the whole history of the House. I am not opposed to this proposal that there shall be a system of old-age pensions introduced. I am not opposed to the Second Reading of the Bill, not because I do not very largely share the views of the hon. Member for Preston in the remarkable speech he made, but because I am one of those who believe that, however great may be the difficulties, practically everybody in this House and out of it is committed in some shape or form to the policy of old-age pensions. I have another reason. I am quite aware—I have no doubt I have indulged in it myself, and shall do so again if I remain in this House—that to express views of this kind is to expose oneself to the charge of being afraid to vote against a thing on political reasons to which on principle you are opposed. That is not my reason for saying I am not opposed to the principle of old-age pensions. The hon. Member for Preston accepts the principle of old-age pensions but demurs to the method by which you propose to give them. Everybody who has taken part in the debate accepts the principle. But I have another reason. There have been some not unnatural jibes delivered from the Benches opposite. The Chancellor of the Exchequer—I do not complain of it—delivered one against the Party who sit on this side of the House because we had failed to carry into effect old-age pensions. Now a step has been taken which cannot be retraced. You may alter the conditions and provisions of this Bill, and I hope you will. You may make it more likely to realise the result which I believe you all have at heart. But one thing cannot be done. Old-age pensions have been talked about and have been brought up to the point at which the present Government found them, largely thanks to the efforts and the labours of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, whose absence from these debates is little short of a tragedy. The Government have gone further. They have tabled a measure which has been now read throughout the length and breadth of the land, and in the hearts of thousands of poor people there has been raised the conviction that before many months pass these pensions will be within their reach. That makes it in my judgment impossible for anybody to refuse, at this stage at all events, consideration to a scheme which makes such a result possible, even though some of the methods by which it is to be done are in our view altogether undesirable. On these two grounds therefore I would not take a step which would make further consideration of the measure impossible.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION (No. 2) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

LORD R. CECIL said he understood the hon. Member for Bermondsey was apprehensive that the Bill might possibly put some additional liability upon medical men. He was willing to insert an Amendment which would make it perfectly clear that no such liability arose.

DR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey) said he withdrew any objection to the Bill.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, That the Petition from the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Fulham, praying to be represented by counsel before the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill, be referred to the Committee on the Bill.—(*Mr. Timothy Davies.*)

Adjourned at seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 16th June, 1908.

The Lord Poltimore—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed.

Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Read 3ª, and passed.

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Draycott Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments; and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to No. 1 Order.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners.

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Hurly's Divorce Bill [H.L.]—Returned from the Commons agreed to.

Llanelly Gas Bill [H.L.]; Great Western Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to, with an Amendment.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Minutes of Evidence and proceedings before this House on the Second Reading, together with the documents deposited in the case, returned from the Commons.

Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1.) Bill [No. 94]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill [No.95]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill [No. 96]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill [No. 97]; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill [No. 98].—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899), deemed to have been read 2ª (The Lord Denman, for the Lord Herschell), and reported from the Committee. [No. 99.]

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.] (Bridgwater and Llandudno Orders); Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] (Potteries, etc., Order); Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.] (Sevenoaks and Stourbridge Water Orders); Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) [H.L.] (No. 1 Order); Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill; Local Government

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

(Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the following Lords be proposed to the House to form the Select Committee for the consideration of the said Bills; (viz.)—

E. Morley,
L. Ribblesdale (Chairman),
L. Templemore,
L. Leigh,
L. Lochee;

agreed to; and the said Lords appointed accordingly: The Committee to meet on Wednesday the 24th instant, at Two o'clock; and all petitions referred to the Committee, with leave to the petitioners praying to be heard by counsel against the Bills to be heard as desired, as also counsel for the Bills.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (RECESS).

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House that the following Papers having been commanded to be presented to this House by His Majesty had been so presented on the following dates by delivery to the Clerk of the Parliaments, pursuant to Standing Order No. CXI. viz.—

1. Education (Scotland).—I.—Reports, statistics, etc., relating to continuation classes and central institutions (Scotland), 1906–1907. (June 3.) II.—Report and papers relating to the training of teachers, for the year 1906–1907. (June 12.)

2. Trade Reports: Annual Series. No. 4001. German (Consular District of Berlin). No. 4002. Greece (Corfu). (June 3.) No. 4004. Portugal (Consular District of Oporto). (June 10.) No. 4005. Roumania. (June 12.) No. 4006. Persia (Khorasan). No. 4007. France (Dunkirk). No. 4008. Germany (Leipzig and Chemnitz). (June 11.) No. 4009. Turkey (Constantinople and District.) (June 12.) No. 4010. France (Society Islands). No. 4011. China (Chinkiang). (June 11.)

3. Commercial, No. 4. (1908).—Return showing the countries between which commercial treaties were in force on 1st January, 1908. (June 3.)

4. Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. —Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1907. (June 3.)

5. Board of Education—I.—Statement as to the age at which compulsory education ceases in certain foreign countries and British Colonies. (June 4.) II.—Memorandum on special rating for school purposes in Quebec and Ontario. (June 5.) III.—Regulations for Secondary Schools (in force from 1st August, 1908, in Wales and Monmouthshire.) (June 10.)

6. Lunacy (Scotland) Act.—Fiftieth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland (June 4.)

7. Miscellaneous, No. 4. (1908).—Protocols of the eleven plenary meetings of the second Peace Conference held at the Hague in 1907; with the annexes to the protocols. (June 4.)

8. Contempts of Courts Bill, 1883.—Copy of a Bill to amend the law as to contempt of Courts, brought from the House of Lords to the House of Commons, 2nd May, 1883. (June 4.)

9. Sights Tests.—Report on the Sight Tests used in the Mercantile Marine for the year ended 31st December, 1907 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper [Cd. 3542.]). (June 5.)

10. Treaty Series, No. 14. (1908.—Declaration between the United Kingdom and Paraguay, amending the Treaty of Commerce of 16th October, 1884; signed at Asuncion, 14th March, 1908. (June 5.)

11. Local Government Board (Scotland).—Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1907. (June 5.)

12. Mines and Quarries (General Report and Statistics for 1906; Part IV.

Colonial and Foreign Statistics).—Statistics relating to persons employed, output, and accidents at mines and quarries in the British Colonies and in Foreign countries. (June 10.)

13. Colonies (Annual).—No. 559. Swaziland. (June 11.)

14. Vivisection (Royal Commission).—Fifth Report of the Commissioners, with Appendix (Minutes of Evidence, March 1908, with Appendices and Index.) (June 11.)

15. Sick and Wounded in War.—Papers relating to the Geneva Convention, 1906. (June 11.)

16. Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland).—Seventh Annual General Report of the Department, 1906–1907. (June 12.)

17. Trade.—Annual Statement of the trade of the United Kingdom with foreign countries and British Possessions, 1907, compared with the four preceding years. Volume II. (Abstract and detailed tables of trade with each country and at each port, and miscellaneous tables.) (June 12.)

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INDIA (PRESS ACT).

Full text of Indian Press Act, VII., of 1908.

TRADE WITH NEWFOUNDLAND (BOARD OF TRADE, COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE).

Report upon the conditions and prospects of British Trade in Newfoundland, by Mr. Richard Grigg, Special Commissioner of the Advisory Committee to the Board of Trade on Commercial Intelligence.

JUDICIAL STATISTICS (IRELAND) 1907.

Part II. Civil Statistics.

ARMY.

Statement showing—

Number of Special Reservists recruited during the period 15th January to 16th May, 1908, as compared with the number of Militia recruits for the corresponding period of 1907; Disposal of Militia men belonging to the disbanded battalions of Militia; Number of Special Reservists drilling at the various depots on 1st May, 1908.

AFRICA, No. 3 (1908).

Correspondence respecting the taxation of natives and other questions in the Congo State.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP (PROCESS OF CASTING BRASS).

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by William Wills, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, on the draft regulations proposed to be made for factories in which the process of casting brass is carried on.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MAIL SHIPS ACTS, 1891 AND 1902.

Rules of Court, dated 3rd June, 1908.

CRIMINAL APPEAL ACT, 1907.

(Crown Office Rules, 1906.)

MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1906.

Rules of Court for appeals under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906, Section 68.

SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE.

Rules of the Supreme Court (June, 1908).

PATENTS AND DESIGNS ACT, 1907.

Rules of the Supreme Court.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 TO 1903.

Orders:—Dated 23rd May, 1908, defining a foreign animals quarantine station at Irongate Wharf, in the City of London. Dated 25th May, 1908, revoking Order No. 7487, of the 23rd May, 1908, defining a foreign animals quarantine station at Irongate Wharf, in the City of London.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Rules made by the Board of Trade :—Dated 18th May, 1908. Dated 25th May, 1908.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

(Borough of Batley).—Order made by the Council of the Borough of Batley, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, altering the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the Borough.

(County of Lancaster).—Order made by the Council of the County of Lancaster, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the urban district of Great Harwood.

(City of Worcester).—Order made by the Council of the City of Worcester, and confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, fixing the hours of closing for certain classes of shops within the city.

Order by the Secretary for Scotland, dated 21st May, 1908, providing for the early closing of certain classes of shops in the burgh of Greenock.

POLLING DISTRICTS.

(City of London).—Order made by the Justices of the City of London altering the polling districts within the city.

(County of Carnarvon).—Order made by the Council of the County of Carnarvon dividing the Middle Llandwrog Parliamentary Polling District into two separate districts.

(County of Salop).—Order made by the Council of the County of Salop with respect to the polling districts in the four Parliamentary divisions of the county.

POLICE (COUNTIES AND BOROUGHS, ENGLAND AND WALES).

Reports of His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary, for the year ended 29th September, 1907.

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S FUND.

Account of the Receipt and Expenditure under the Seamen's Fund Winding-up Act, from 1st January to 31st December, 1907.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Rules made by the Intermediate Education Board for (Ireland): I.—Appointing the places at which examinations for 1908 shall be held. II.—Determining the number of centre superintendents to conduct the examinations in the year 1908. Accounts of receipts and expenditure of the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland, for the year ended 31st December, 1907; together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon.

SAVINGS BANKS AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

(Post Office Savings Banks Fund).—Account for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

(Savings Banks Fund).—Account for the year ended 20th November, 1907.

(Friendly Societies Fund).—Account for the year ended 20th November, 1907.

NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (IRELAND) PENSION FUND.

Account of receipts and payments in respect of the capital and income of the above fund, for the year ended 31st December, 1907.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

Returns showing up to 31st March, 1908—I.—The amount of Consolidated Stock; the application of the money raised by such stock; the sums carried to the Consolidated Loans Fund; the application of the Consolidated Loans Fund; an estimate of the expenditure of the council for all purposes, for the year ended 31st March, 1909. II.—All moneys raised by the Metropolitan Board of Works and the Council since the passing of the Act for the purposes mentioned in the Act; particulars in relation to every parish, district, union, or place in respect whereof a loan has been obtained from the Metropolitan Board of Works or the Council since the passing of the Act.

FINES, ETC. (IRELAND).

Abstract of account of fines accounted for by the registrar of Petty Sessions' Clerks, for the year 1906.

DOGS REGULATION (IRELAND) ACT, 1865.

Accounts of receipts and expenditure under the Act, for the year 1907.

PUBLIC RECORDS.

(Admiralty Department). — Twelfth Schedule containing a list and particulars of classes of documents which have been removed from the department of the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and deposited in the Public Record Office, but are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation therein.

(Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature (King's Remembrancers and Acknowledgments Department).—Schedule containing list and particulars of classes of documents existing or accruing in the King's Remembrancer's and Acknowledgments Department of the Central Office of the Supreme Court of Judicature which are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation in the Public Record Office.

POST OFFICE.

(Foreign and Colonial Post).—The Foreign and Colonial Post (Cash on Delivery) Warrant, 1908, dated 18th May, 1908.

(Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post, Dutch East Indies).—The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 19) Warrant, 1908, dated 24th May, 1908.

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Orders in Council, dated 4th June, 1908, approving memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty praying sanction to :—The grant to officers on return from foreign service of certain additional leave on full pay in cases where the special circumstances warrant such extension; the payment of an allowance under certain conditions to petty officers and men of the Royal Naval Reserve who may be injured or contract illness during training; the grant of 1s. a day to all Kroomen serving in His Majesty's Fleet.

LOAN SOCIETIES.

Abstracts of Accounts of loan societies in England and Wales, furnished to the central office for the registry of friendly societies :—For the year ended 31st December, 1905,; for the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PORT OF ARUNDEL.

Account and Report for 1907–1908.

MEDWAY CONSERVANCY.

Statement of receipts and expenditure by the conservators, for the year ended 25th March, 1908.

Delivered (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

COMMONS BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to regulate the turning out upon commons of entire animals—Was presented by the Earl Carrington; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 92.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.].

Message from the Commons that they concur in the resolution of this House communicated to them on 20th May last, that it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L.] be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill [H.L.] are to be referred.

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

Order of 2nd April last committing the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House discharged.

COMPANIES (CONSOLIDATION) BILL [H.L.].

POST OFFICE CONSOLIDATION BILL [H.L.].

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.].

Moved, That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the Commons to consider the said Bills (The Lord Granard (*E. Granard*)); agreed to: The Lords following were named of the Committee:—

L. Chancellor.	L. Stanley of Alderley.
E. Halsbury.	L. James.
L. Granard (*E. Granard*).	

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the Commons in the appointment of a Chairman: Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith, and to request them to appoint Five Members of that House to be joined with the said Committee.

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Clauses agreed to.

Preamble:

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL moved to insert, at the end of the Preamble, the words, "or Protectorates." He said that it was not quite clear that the words "British possessions" would include British Protectorates.

Amendment moved—

"To add, at the end of the Preamble, the words, 'or Protectorates.'"—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: May I ask whether it is intended to define "Protectorates"?

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL: I do not know that the word requires any definition.

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: It does require definition, undoubtedly.

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL: I understand that the word has never been defined in previous Acts of Parliament.

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: That is quite true. But it requires definition none the less.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Standing Committee negatived. The Report of Amendment to be received to-morrow; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 93.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 16th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill; Marriages Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill (by Order).—Read a second time; and ordered to be considered upon Thursday.

Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS BILL.

Petition from Liverpool, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Gunnersbury, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Bent Colliery, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COLENSO, FRANCIS ERNEST.

Petition of Francis Ernest Colenso, for redress of Miss Harriette Emily Colenso's grievances; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Bath; Faringdon; and Huntingdonshire; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Gunnersbury; Highbury Hill; and Rochdale; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberdulais; Abergwynfi; Altrincham; Brixton Hill; Builth Wells; Canonbury; Droylsden; Exeter; Glyncorrwg; Islington; Maesmynis; Maesteg; New Herrington; Old Cumnock; Seven Sisters; Southport; Southwark; Stocksfield; Tonna; and Tredegar; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Innerleithen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INQUIRY INTO CHARITIES (COUNTY OF BERKS).

Return [presented, 15th June] to be printed. [No. 178.]

INQUIRY INTO CHARITIES (ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF DEVON).

Return [presented 15th June] to be printed. [No. 179.]

NAVAL AND MARINE PAY AND PENSIONS ACT, 1865.

Copy presented, of Orders in Council, dated 4th June, 1908, approving Memorials of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty praying sanction to: (1) The Grant to Officers on return from Foreign Service of certain additional Leave on full Pay in cases where the special circumstances warrant such extension; (2) the Payment of an Allowance, under certain conditions, to Petty Officers and Men of the Royal Naval Reserve who may be injured or contract illness during training; (3) the Grant of One Shilling a day to all Kroomen serving in His Majesty's Fleet [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY.

Copy presented, of Statement showing: (1) Number of Special Reservists recruited during the period 15th January to 16th May, 1908, as compared with the number of Militia recruits for the corresponding period of 1907; (2) disposal of Militiamen belonging to the disbanded battalions of Militia; (3) number of Special Reservists drilling at the various depots on 1st May, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST).

Copy presented, of the Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 20) Warrant, 1908, dated 27th May, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CANADA.

Copy presented, of Report of Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King on his Mission to England in connection with the Immigration of Asiatics into Canada [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Loan Societies. Abstract of Accounts of Loan Societies in England and Wales for the years 1905 and 1906, furnished to the Central Office for the Registry of Friendly Societies [by Act].

EAST INDIA (CUSTOMS REVENUE).

Address for "Return showing the yield of Import Duty on every article taxable under the Indian tariff, so far as the Customs Returns collected in India enable such information to be given, during the years 1905–6, 1906–7, and 1907–8."—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Compensation for late Sub-Postmistress at Annfield Plain.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that the late unestablished sub-postmistress of Annfield Plain was required to alter and enlarge her office in such a way that in so doing she spent her savings, amounting to more than £100; and that, shortly afterwards, she was driven to resign by being required to undertake telephone work involving night attendance, although she had already made it clear that it was impossible for her to undertake it; and whether, seeing that she is now left with the premises upon her hands unletable in consequence of the alterations she was required by the Post Office Department to make, he will say what action he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Under the conditions of their appointment sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses are required to provide suitable accommodation for Post Office business, and payment for this accommodation is included in the remuneration. The office at Annfield Plain was found to be inadequate and the sub-postmistress was required to improve it. She objected to undertake a night telephone service, but it was found necessary in the public interest to establish such a service, subject, of course, to the usual payment for its performance. The sub-postmistress resigned, and though she has no claim for compensation I am anxious to treat her with consideration. A special allowance of £5 a year was made to her from the date on which the alterations in the office were completed to the date on which she voluntarily resigned, and I am prepared to consider any application which she may make for appointment to some suitable office elsewhere.

Foreigners and Educational Building Contracts.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the Derbyshire Education Committee, who are erecting a large block of temporary school buildings at Long Eaton, have purchased practically the whole of the joinery work required from German firms, and that English firms were not asked to tender for the work; whether the action of this committee had his sanction; and, if not, whether he will take steps to ascertain the reason why this committee purchased manufactured joinery abroad, in view of the number of men engaged in this trade in this country out of employment.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I have no information as to where the joinery work for this school has been purchased. The function of the Board of Education in this connection is limited to securing that the buildings and equipment of public elementary schools are satisfactory from an educational point of view and not unreasonably extravagant, and they have no power to direct from what sources the local education authority should make their purchases. I understand that the building in question is a "Doecker" building, which the Board regard as suitable for temporary purposes.

Non-Practising Barristers as Revising Barristers.

MR. MACLEAN (Bath): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that barristers who have ceased for years to practise either on circuit, or otherwise, and have no active connection either with their circuit or the bar, are appointed and reappointed as revising barristers; and whether he will introduce legislation to secure that none but practising barristers shall in future be appointed or reappointed to the office of revising barrister.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I am informed by the Lord Chief Justice that the objection to appointments of the kind mentioned in the hon. Member's Question has been fully recognised by His Majesty's Judges, and in consequence it was resolved some five or six years ago that, except under special circumstances, no appointments made after the date of the resolution should be renewed for a period longer than ten years from the date of the first appointment. All appointments as revising barristers are annual, and are reconsidered each year before reappointment.

Claim of Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is yet in a position to make any statement as to Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg's claim against the Russian Government for his illegal arrest and incarceration at Odessa in March last.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) As I informed the hon. Member in reply to a Question on 3rd June, as soon as a decision has been come to I will communicate it to him.

Discharges from Mount Pleasant Postal Factory.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state the number of men discharged from the Mount Pleasant factories during the last month, and can he give any reason for these discharges; and will he state if any chances of transfer or reinstatement will be given to them as soon as opportunity occurs.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The number of men is eight, boys and youths being excluded. The reason for the discharges is the inevitable fluctuation of work where 800 to 900 men are employed. Two of the men have been re-employed at the Post Office factory at Holloway. I regret that there is no immediate likelihood of finding work for the others; if any opportunity occurred their claims would be carefully considered.

Unqualified Attendants in Dockyard Surgeries.

MR. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether unqualified men are employed in the surgeries in the Royal home dockyards who see and attend to injuries without the supervision of the surgeons; if so, what is the official position of these men as borne in the Admiralty books; how many are there in the home dockyards, specifying each dockyard separately; and is it proposed to make any alteration by which in every case of injury the surgeons shall at least personally inspect and examine the patient at the time such injuries are attended to.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There are no unqualified men employed in the surgeries in the Royal home dockyards who see and attend to injuries without the supervision of the surgeon. The surgery attendants are fully qualified to give first aid, and do their work in the same manner as the sick berth staff on board ship or nurses in a civil hospital, under the immediate supervision of the medical officers, who alone are responsible. The numbers at each dockyard are as follows—

	Surgery Attendants.		Assistant Surgery Attendants.	
	Established.	Hired.	Established.	Hired.
Portsmouth - - -	1	—	1	1
Devonport - - - -	2	—	1	—
Chatham - - - -	1	—	2	—
Sheerness - - - -	1	—	—	—
Pembroke Dock - - -	1	—	1	1
Haulbowline - - -	—	—	1	—

No alteration in the present system is considered necessary.

Navy—Allocation of Mechanicians.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will say into what ships mechanicians have been drafted; what was the complement of each of these ships in 1905 in men belonging to the engine-room artificer branch; and what is the complement now in the engine-room artificer branch and mechanicians.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The allocation of mechanicians when confirmed in that rating is left to the commanders-in-chief of fleets, and there is no information in office which would enable a definite reply to be given to this inquiry, beyond that it is known that two mechanicians have been absorbed in H.M.S. "Queen" and two in H.M.S. "Glory," both on the Mediterranean Station. The complement of chief and other engine-room artificers laid down for those two ships is as follows:—H.M.S. 'Queen": three chief engine-room artificers, fourteen engine-room artificers; H.M.S. "Glory": three chief engine-room artificers, thirteen engine-room artificers. As two mechanicians replace one engine-room artificer in a ship's complement, the numbers now in those ships should be:—H.M.S. "Queen": three chief engine-room artificers, thirteen engine-room artificers, two mechanicians; H.M.S. "Glory": three chief engine-room artificers, twelve engine-room artificers; two mechanicians. Otherwise the complement of engine-room artificers in both ships is the same as in 1905.

Engine-room Artificers.

Mr. BELLAIRS: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can furnish a table giving the number of entries of engine-room artificers and the number of promotions to chief engine-room artificer, artificer engineer, and chief artificer engineer for 1903 and each subsequent year or part of a year.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The following is the table asked for by the hon. Member—

Year.	Entries of engine-room artificers.	Advancements to chief engine-room artificer.	Promotion to artificer engineer.	Promotion to chief artificer engineer.
1903	410	320	101	36
1904	269	109	67	27
1905	29	86	17	21
1906	95	61	15	5
1907	138*	94	14	6
1908 (to June)	100†	45	8	3

* 94 boy artificers rated engine-room artificers, 5th Class, in addition.

† 46 " " "

Status of Skilled Labourers in Dockyards.

Mr. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he intends to take any steps to improve the *status* of the skilled labourers employed as machinists in His Majesty's dockyards by altering the style of their calling to that of machinists and by paying them a minimum wage of 25s. 6d. a week, thereby conferring upon them benefits similar to those enjoyed by other branches of workmen in His Majesty's dockyards and raising them to the level of employees in private workshops.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There is no present intention of changing the *status* of the men referred to. The scale of pay for skilled labourers provides rates up to 2s. 6d. more than the minimum wage specified in the Question, and the Board are prepared to consider any individual cases, presented to them in the usual way, in which employees may think they have a grievance.

Collecting of Inland Revenue Licence Duties.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury by whom are the duties on licences to deal in game, licences for dogs, killing game, guns, carriages, including duties charged under Subsection 1 of Section 8 of The Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, armorial bearings, and male servants, collected in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; and to whom does the revenue from the duties on such licences go.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) In Great Britain the duties on the licences in question are collected by officers of Excise and ultimately paid over to the Local Taxation Accounts. In Ireland, in the case of dogs the tax is a local or municipal tax, and the licences, it is understood, are issued by the petty sessions clerk in each district. None of the other licences specified exist in Ireland except gun licences and licences for killing and dealing in game. These latter duties are collected by the Excise, and are ultimately paid over to the Local Taxation Account, Ireland.

Adulterated Calf Meal and Manures.

MR. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he will state the names of manufacturers of calf meals and manures whose manufactures have been tested by the Department experts and found of inferior quality or adulterated; and if he would state what price those commodities were retailed at, and their fair commercial value.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) As a result of numerous analyses of calf meals sold in Ireland the Department are of opinion that the meals largely in use are sold at prices greatly in excess of their actual feeding value. Furthermore, numerous complaints have been made to the Department by farmers that their calves have suffered by being fed on these meals. Prosecutions in several cases are pending, and the necessary publicity will be gained by this means. The Department have not put a commercial value on all these meals, as the value of any particular sample depends largely upon its freshness and general condition. The ingredients for the meal recommended in the Department's leaflet No. 54 can be obtained at the present time for 11s. 6d. per cwt.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether an old couple who are now over seventy and who have just managed to exist without Poor Law relief, and who may be compelled between now and 1st January, 1909, to apply for such relief, will be thereby debarred from obtaining a pension under the provisions of his scheme.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Receipt of Poor Law relief at any time after 1st January last constitutes a disqualification under Clause 3 (1) (*a*) of the Bill. The case suggested in the Question would certainly be a hard one, but I fear it would not be practicable to deal with it by way of exception.

Charitable Subscriptions and Exemptions from Income-Tax.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can see his way to grant exemption from income-tax on all subscriptions given definitely for reconstruction of infirmaries, in view of the fact that these institutions are so reconstructed entirely for the benefit of the working classes, who cannot otherwise obtain the best professional assistance.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is the broad principle of the Income-Tax Acts to charge income-tax on all profits irrespective of the purpose to which those profits are applied. I regret that I cannot see my way to grant an exemption from duty in favour of income paid away by its owner in the charitable subscriptions in question.

Funeral of Daniel Doran—Refusal to Grant Military Honours.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received the Report regarding the funeral of Daniel Doran from the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief; and, if so, whether he can now make any statement on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The King's Regulations state that military honours at funerals are not to be paid officially to officers or soldiers who are not serving at the time of their decease. General and other officers, when the exigencies of the service permitted, have, however, authorised the use of a gun carriage. In this particular case the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief reports that, as there is only a training depot of the Army Service Corps at Manchester, it would not be practicable to grant this indulgence in all cases of old veterans dying at Manchester without seriously interfering with the training of the recruits. It is not proposed to make any alterations in existing regulations.

Staffs at Sandhurst and Woolwich Colleges.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Secretary of State for War what are the number of instructors on the educational side, the number of officers on the disciplinary side, the number of warrant and non-commissioned officers associated with the cadets in instructional work, and the number of cadets, with their average age, at the Royal Military Colleges at Sandhurst and Woolwich respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The figures are as follows—

——	R.M.A.	R.M.C.
Commandant	1	1
Educational staff (officers)	23	31
Executive staff (officers)	4	6
Civilian instructors	10	4
Warrant and non-commissioned officers employed in instructional work	13	29
Number of cadets	144	364
Average age of cadets	19 10/12 years	19 5/12 years

All the officers at both establishments, except the non-combatant officers, assist the commandants in the maintenance of discipline.

Territorial Army—Instructions to County Associations.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can arrange to have copies of all circular letters and memoranda, other than confidential or secret documents, addressed by the Army Council to County Associations, placed in the Library of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The regulations for the Territorial Forces, which will shortly be published, will include in a compact form the instructions contained in the various circular letters and memoranda issued to the County Associations. I do not think, therefore, that any good purpose would be served by placing these loose documents in the Library.

Payment to Permanent Staff of Yeomanry Regiments.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPPS: To ask the Secretary of State for War what instructions were issued to County Associations in regard to the payments to be made to the permanent staff of the Yeomanry regiments; and, in framing these instructions, was the Yeomanry squadron taken as the equivalent to one or two companies of infantry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The work involved in an infantry company is taken as the standard, and Associations will fix rates for other units, taking £6 10s. for the amount of work in the infantry company as the basis. In cases where the permanent staff are responsible for the cleaning of arms and harness the Yeomanry squadron counts as the equivalent of two infantry companies.

Army Clothing Contracts.

MR. WATT: To ask the Secretary of State for War what was the value of contracts for clothing of the Regular Army and Militia during the last financial year; and how much of that in value was placed in Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The value of contracts connected with clothing placed in Scotland during 1907–8 amounted to nearly £40,000. Information as regards the cost of similar contracts placed elsewhere in 1907–8 would involve considerable labour in preparation, and I hope my hon. friend will not press for it.

English Historical Monuments.

MR. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): To ask the Prime Minister whether he has received any letters or petitions asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission for England and Wales, such as that recently appointed for Scotland, to prepare a list of ancient and historical monuments and constructions; whether he can give the names of the more important bodies which have so approached him; and whether he will recommend that such a Royal Commission be now appointed.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) I have received communications on the subject mentioned in the Question from the Royal Historical Society, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Society of Architects, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the Photographic Survey of Warwickshire, and I am considering the representations made by these bodies.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Cruiser Armaments.

MR. THORNTON (Clapham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the professional advisers of the Admiralty consider that a 3-pounder gun, such as is mounted in the "Natal" class of cruisers, is an adequate defence for repelling an attack by modern destroyers or torpedo craft.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The 3-pounder gun, when suitably mounted, as in the "Natal" class, is considered adequate for repelling attack by modern destroyers and torpedo craft.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that all the later ships are fitted with 25-pounder guns, and does he consider the 25-pounder gun necessary when the 3-pounder suffices?

MR. MCKENNA: The 3-pounder gun when properly mounted does suffice.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Does the mounting affect the destructive power of the gun?

MR. MCKENNA: Oh, no. But when the gun is mounted as in the "Natal" class it is adequate.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Then why are 25-pounders supplied in the later armed ships?

MR. MCKENNA: I will make inquiries.

Training of Naval Cadets.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, in view of the increase in the cost of educating officers under the new scheme of training which came into operation in January, 1904, whether he can state how many of the first batch of seventy-five cadets have since been lost to the Navy.

MR. MCKENNA: Of the seventy-five cadets of the first entry fifty-six are now midshipmen and three are in their final term as cadets in the training cruiser. The remaining sixteen have been withdrawn for various reasons. I may add that my hon. friend's expression "lost to the Navy" is hardly appropriate, since a sufficient surplus of cadets is always entered to allow of a wastage which is a necessary corollary to any system of early entry.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there was no wastage whatever, except through death, under the old system?

Mr. McKENNA: I must have notice of that.

Naval Mechanicians.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the examination on entry of the men who are now being trained as mechanicians was a simple one in reading and writing, and what are the average limits of age during their training course as mechanicians; whether they are now replacing for engine-room watch-keeping duties men who were entered from the skilled engineering trades on shore after passing an examination in mechanical work; and, in view of the fact that the Douglas Committee of 1905, on whose advice this step was taken, only examined two witnesses on the subject, of whom one was strongly opposed from experience to the proposal, whether he will inquire fully into the heavy cost and as to the efficiency of the new arrangements and their effect on the recruiting of engine-room artificers.

Mr. McKENNA: The educational qualification required of stokers, second class, at the time when the men now training for mechanician entered, was "to read and write fairly"; but they had also to satisfy the examining officer as to their fitness for the rating generally. Before candidates are accepted for the mechanician course, they have to fulfil certain requirements laid down in a circular letter to the Fleet, and to pass a preliminary test in arithmetic and elementary engineering. When the scheme is in complete working order the limit of age for candidates for the mechanician course will be twenty-eight; at present it is thirty-two, and it may be assumed that the majority are approximately of this age. The average age now during the two years mechanician course may be taken roughly as between thirty and thirty-four. Those who pass successfully through the mechanician course and are recommended for confirmation in the rating after a year subsequently at sea replace engine-room artificers in ships' complements for watch-keeping duties in the proportion already stated to the House, namely, two mechanicians to one engine-room artificer, up to a limit of six mechanicians. I beg to refer my hon. friend to the evidence attached to the Report of the Committee which is included in Parliamentary Paper Cd. 2841, from which it will be seen that five witnesses were examined in connection with the mechanician scheme, and their evidence was mainly favourable. The progress and effect of the scheme are being carefully watched.

Rosyth.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what progress has been made in the construction of the new Royal Dockyard at Rosyth and what contracts have been given out.

Mr. McKENNA: No contract has been let for work at Rosyth since the Answer given to the hon. Member on 23rd March. The preparation of quantities and other contract particulars is proceeding as rapidly as is practicable, but the contract for the new dockyard cannot be let before the end of the year, as far as can now be foreseen.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say what is the cause of the delay which is taking place beyond the date which was originally suggested to the House by his predecessor?

Mr. McKENNA: The time required for the preparation of quantities.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): Can the right hon. Gentleman say how many years it will take to finish the dockyard?

MR. McKENNA: I do not think I can give any Answer to that at the present moment.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) asked whether the accommodation was now complete for the workmen's buildings that would be required later on.

MR. McKENNA: I should think not. They will not be employed for some time yet.

Tibet.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Chinese Government have accepted the *status quo* in Tibet in regard to abstention from any arrangements touching trade regulations with that country previous to consultation with the Indian Government.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The form of the amended Tibet trade regulations, signed at Calcutta on 20th April last by representatives of the Chinese, Tibetan, and British Governments, precludes any alteration in the arrangements made by the regulations otherwise than by agreement between the three Governments.

Indian Frontier Operations.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he is yet in a position to give to the House particulars of the recent military operations in the Mohmand territory, and especially as to the numbers of killed and wounded on both sides, and the respective numbers of prisoners taken.

MR. BUCHANAN: I hope shortly to lay Papers giving full particulars of the recent Mohmand expedition. Our casualties were:—Killed or died of wounds, 36; died of disease, 51; wounded, 175; prisoners, 0. The enemy are believed to have lost between 300 and 400 killed and a large number wounded. Five prisoners were taken.

MR. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India when he will be in a position to give further details of the number of killed and wounded in the recent attack upon the Mohmands at Karghar.

MR. BUCHANAN: Our casualties were two killed and nine wounded; no prisoners were taken. The enemy lost about 120 killed and 200 wounded; the number of prisoners was five.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state to what extent in the conduct of punitive expeditions by the Indian Army, such as that recently carried out against the Mohmands, the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1864 and 1906, and of the regulations under the Hague Convention of 1899, are held to be binding, or whether there are any other rules or customs of war followed on such occasions.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Will the hon. Member at the same time inform the House which of these regulations and conventions are observed by the enemy on the frontier?

MR. BUCHANAN: My Answer to the Question on the Paper covers that. The provisions of the Geneva and Hague Conventions are binding on the contracting Powers only when engaged in hostilities with each other; but the spirit of these Conventions and their provisions as far as practicable are nevertheless observed by British troops in the conduct of punitive expeditions. I would point out to the hon. Member as an instance that it is difficult to send an unarmed medical staff into the field when they are liable to instant attack.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to supply the House with a statement of the cost in men and in money of the recent campaigns on the North-West Frontier, giving as far as possible the numbers of killed, wounded, and prisoners on both sides.

MR. BUCHANAN: The cost of the Zakka Khel and Mohmand expeditions is estimated at £57,000 and £150,000, respectively. Our casualties were:—In the Zakka Khel expedition: Killed and died of wounds, 6; died of disease, 2; wounded, 34; prisoners, 0. In the Mohmand expedition:—Killed and died of wounds, 36; died of disease, 51; wounded, 175; prisoners, 0. The loss of the tribesmen in the Zakka Khel expedition is estimated at 70 killed and 130 wounded; no prisoners. In the Mohmand expedition they are believed to have lost between 300 and 400 killed, and a large number wounded; five prisoners were taken.

MR. H. J. WILSON (Yorkshire, W.R., Holmfirth): May I ask whether a full inquiry will be made as to the circumstances under which these engagements took place and no prisoners were taken?

*MR. REES: Does the hon. Gentleman still consider that there is no underlying suggestion in these questions that the British Army in India otherwise disposes of the wounded?

MR. BUCHANAN: In reply to the question of my hon. friend the Member for the Holmfirth division of Yorkshire he will find all the information he desires to obtain and all the information that is in our possession in the Papers that I have promised to lay on the table, and if he sees those Papers they will disabuse his mind of any idea that our troops in fulfilling their instructions have behaved otherwise than in a way that would commend itself to my hon. friend.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: What became of the British subject—a Hindoo —who was taken prisoner at Peshawur?

MR. BUCHANAN: I cannot say.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the hon. Gentleman inquire?

MR. BUCHANAN: Certainly.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Will the hon. Gentleman say if the expeditions were successful in their object.

MR. BUCHANAN: Yes, Sir.

Mombasa Lighterage Charges.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that the present lighterage charges at Mombasa are 6s. 8d. a ton as against 3s. in other similar ports where a wharf or pier is available; whether the Goverment have it in contemplation to build a deep-water pier at Mombasa, or, if not, whether they will encourage a private firm to do so by granting them the right of collecting the harbour dues for a limited number of years; and whether he has any figures as to the cost of building such a pier, or any information to show that the consequent increase of traffic would pay the interest on the capital expended.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): It has been represented to the Secretary of State that the lighterage charges at Mombasa are excessive, and he is inquiring into the matter with a view to the introduction of competition in the business, if the complaints should prove to be well founded. Inquiries have also been made with regard to the cost of a deep-water pier, but the detailed surveys and borings, on which alone a trustworthy estimate could be formed, have not been undertaken, as the Secretary of State is advised that under the present conditions of traffic at Mombasa ships would probably prefer to load and discharge by lighters even if a pier were provided: so that, even if the cost of the pier were lower than seems likely, it would be unlikely to be a paying investment at the present time.

Alleged Massacres in the Blue Nile Province.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information that he can give to the House with regard to the statements published in Cairo at the end of last month that a large number of prisoners captured during the late disturbances in the Blue Nile province had been placed in irons and then massacred by order of the military authorities.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir E. GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I am aware that a statement such as that described in the Question has appeared in a newspaper at Cairo. The facts are that so far only one man, who was concerned in the murder of Mr. Scott Moncrieff and the Egyptian officer, has been tried and executed, and no prisoners or persons whatever were put to death by order of the military authorities. The statement referred to is, therefore, a gross falsehood without any foundation or excuse.

Cairo House Tax.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the consent of fourteen Powers to the raising of the house tax in Cairo from 8 to 10 per cent. of the annual rent for a new scheme of drainage has been given; and whether the assent of France alone delays the execution of this scheme.

SIR EDWARD GREY: All the Powers have agreed, and the scheme will be put into execution without delay.

Persian Unrest.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can furnish any information as to the general state of unrest in Persia; and whether he intends to take any steps to safeguard the lives and property and interests of British subjects in that country.

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's *Charge d'Affaires* at Teheran has reported the existence of considerable excitement and unrest, but he expresses no apprehension of danger to the lives, property or interests of foreigners.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: What was the date of the latest intelligence?

SIR EDWARD GREY: It was quite recent.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): Has the right hon. Gentleman any information as to the violation of the Persian frontier by Russian troops?

SIR EDWARD GREY: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper. Perhaps the hon. Member will give notice.

Commercial Treaties—Most-Favoured Nation Clause.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if there have been any infringements within recent years of the principle of the most-favoured nation clause as against this country.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Yes, Sir; instances have arisen which are of a somewhat technical character. Some have been or are in process of being adjusted; and others are still under discussion. I can, if desired, give the hon. Member the instances referred to which are still under discussion.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON was understood to ask if, in spite of remonstrances, British spirits were receiving less-favoured nation treatment in the United States?

SIR EDWARD GREY: There have been differences of opinion with regard to the application of the doctrine.

Bagdad Railway.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he would state to the House the name of the terminus of the Bagdad Railway, stipulated for in the German-Turkish Convention.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The alignment of the railway is described in Article 1 of the Bagdad Railway Convention of March 5th, 1903, which has been published. The terminus of the railway is to be Bussorah, but a branch line is, according to the Convention, to be built from Zobeir to a point on the Persian Gulf to be hereafter determined.

MR. ASHLEY: Will this point be definitely under British influence in the Persian Gulf?

SIR EDWARD GREY: All I have quoted are the original terms of the Convention.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the British Government have no voice in the determination as to the terminus?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The British Government were not concerned in the original railway Convention.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Has it ever been contemplated that the line should end at Bussorah?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I cannot say what the promoters contemplate. All I know is that these are the actual terms of the Bagdad Convention of 1903.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Have the British Government consented that a coaling station shall be established at Bussorah?

SIR EDWARD GREY: We have not given any consent.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: Does not the right hon. Gentleman apprehend a disturbance of the balance of power in the Persian Gulf in consequence of this Convention?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The hon. Member is raising a wide question as to what the effect will be if the railway Convention is carried through. It is a long way from being carried through.

Japan and Southern Manchurian Trade.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Japanese Government are insisting on any preferential advantages to Japanese trade and industry over those of any other Power in Southern Manchuria.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The answer is in the negative.

Railway Development in the East.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will state what progress has been made with the pending negotiations concerning the two railway schemes through Novi Bazar to Salonica and the Danube-Adriatic line.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have no definite information on the subject.

Great Britain and Russia.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether arrangements are being proposed for the Czar of Russia to visit Great Britain in the near future; and whether, before any final steps are taken, opportunity will be given for the House to express its opinion as to the policy of such a visit.

SIR EDWARD GREY: No arrangements have been proposed for a visit by the Emperor of Russia in the near future and consequently the eventuality contained in the second part of the Question does not arise.

Cost of Egyptian Army of Occupation.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs who were the parties to the original and subsequent negotiations for fixing Egypt's contribution to the costs of the Army of Occupation in Egypt; on what basis the amounts decided on were settled; whether there were any written negotiations, and, if so, what; and, if not, by what persons were they carried on.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The negotiations have been carried on between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Egypt through the British Agent and Consul-General in Egypt. They have, as a rule, taken the form of written communications. The contribution represents the amount by which the cost of the British force in Egypt exceeds the cost of the same force at home, and this is the basis on which the amounts have been settled.

Cairo Drainage Scheme.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give particulars of the drainage scheme for Cairo alluded to in Sir Eldon Gorst's Report; what were the different schemes considered by the authorities; whether any committee of sanitary officers inquired into the matter; if so, whether their names and their deliberations can be made known; whether any opportunity is to be afforded for public discussion of a scheme involving the expenditure of

£2,000,000 before it is set on foot; and what is the nature of the objection which delays the assent of the French Government to the proposals laid before them and the other Powers in this connection by the Egyptian Government.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The only information with respect to this scheme of which His Majesty's Government are in possession is contained in a note, dated 5th July 1907, in which the Egyptian Government asked the consent of the Powers to the increase of taxation necessary for putting the plan into execution. A copy of this note will be sent to the hon. Member if he desires it. With respect to the last part of his Question, all the Powers, as I have already stated in the House, have assented to the proposals of the Egyptian Government.

Proposed European Legislative Body in Egypt.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Egyptian Government is pursuing the scheme put forward by Lord Cromer for a European legislative body in Egypt; whether, if so, he can state at what stage the negotiations have arrived; which, if any, of the Powers have been consulted in the matter, and with what result; and whether he will lay upon the Table any Correspondence on the subject that has taken place between the Egyptian Government and the Powers parties to the capitulations.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The last information on the subject which is in my possession is to be found in Sir Eldon Gorst's Report for 1907 (Egypt No. 1, 1908) in the last paragraph of the first section, under the heading "Capitulations," to which I beg to refer the hon. Member. The question is continuing to receive consideration, but the paragraph referred to shows some of the difficulties. There has not yet been correspondence with other Powers.

Pension Officers.

MR. RENDALL (Gloucestershire, Thornbury): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under Section 8, Sub-section 4, of the Old-age Pension Bill, clerks to guardians who are not required to devote the whole of their time to their office will be eligible for appointment as pension officers.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): Such appointments would, under the Clause referred to in the Question, be within the discretion of the Treasury; but the intention of the Government, as stated by my right hon. friend the Prime Minister, in the Budget Speech, is that the pension officers should be permanent civil servants who are required to give their whole time to the Government service.

Transfer of the Excise.

MR. SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there has been any inquiry on the part of the Board of Inland Revenue on the subject of the proposals to hand over the Excise to the Board of Customs, and to transfer the establishment and other licences from Government to local officials; and whether any Report was obtained by the Board from any of its officials on the subject before these changes were decided on, or whether the advice from distinguished officials on which the Government relies has been the individual advice of men who have occupied high positions but who have had no practical training in and no personal contact with the actual work of the Department concerned.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I can only refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave in reply to the four Questions put by him on the 4th instant.

MR. SEARS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in deciding to transfer the Excise branch of the Inland Revenue to the Board of Customs, provision is proposed to be made for the work now performed by Excise officers in connection with the Income-Tax, Stamp, and Estate Duties, which will remain with the Board of Inland Revenue; and whether it is proposed to set up and maintain separate establishments throughout the country with distinct sets of officials; and will he be bringing in Supplementary Estimates to meet the additional expenditure which will be involved.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Provision will be made for the work referred to. It is not proposed to set up separate establishments in connection with such work.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state upon what data he has arrived at the conclusion that the total unclaimed balances in the hands of the bankers of the United Kingdom do not exceed the sum of £600,000; and whether, in forming that estimate, he has taken into consideration the value of unclaimed plate, jewellery, shares, and other securities, and the amount represented by old banknotes, which there is reasonable ground for assuming to be lost or destroyed.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The Estimate to which my hon. friend refers was arrived at as the result of private inquiries made a few years ago, and has reference to unclaimed moneys and securities deposited with banks. As I stated in the House yesterday, I think it would be very difficult to obtain a precise valuation of the other things to which the Question refers.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: Should I be in order in asking from whom the right hon. Gentleman got the information, and if he seriously believes it?

[No Answer was returned.]

Imprisonment for Debt.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the estimated total cost to the public during the last financial year of, and in connection with, the imprisonment and maintenance of persons committed to prison in England and Wales for contempt of court in respect of non-compliance with orders for the payment of debts.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): No separate account is kept of the cost of the imprisonment and maintenance of debtors. During the year ended 31st December, 1907, the number of such persons committed to prisons in England and Wales was 8,762. If the average period of their imprisonment is taken at fourteen days, and the average cost of local prisoners in general as the basis of computation, the estimated total cost of these 8,762 debtors would be £7,523. There are no figures available for the last financial year.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: I beg to ask the Secretary for the Home Department how many persons were committed to prison in England and Wales during the year 1907 for contempt of court in respect of non-compliance with orders for the payment of debts, distinguishing as far as possible those committed in respect of rates and taxes and those committed in respect of other debts.

MR. GLADSTONE: The number of debtors committed in 1907 from County Courts was, as I said in answer to the previous Question, 8,762. It is not possible to distinguish by means of any of the existing Returns between the different classes of debtors so committed. I may say that all the available figures as to debtor prisoners have been furnished to the Select Committee on Imprisonment for Debt.

Salt Patents and Unemployment.

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a new process of making salt has been discovered which, whilst it is estimated to cheapen production by 70 to 75 per cent., is also expected seriously to increase the number of unemployed workpeople; whether he will consider as to the best means of preventing this and similar inventions being secured by companies or syndicates and operated by them to the disadvantage of the public; and if, with that object in view, he will further consider the desirability of acquiring such inventions in the interest of the State, in order that the State may work the inventions or allow private persons or firms to do so on payment of royalty to the State, and so secure better terms to the inventor than inventors usually obtain from capitalists and at the same time valuable rights for the State.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I presume that the process referred to is that protected by Tee's patent of 1903 for improvements in the manufacture of salt, which I understand was purchased from the inventor by the New Salt Syndicate (Limited) in 1905. No complaint has reached the Board of Trade that the invention is being worked to the disadvantage of the public, nor does my information enable me to say to what extent it will cheapen the manufacture of salt or increase or decrease the employment of labour. The proposal that the State should embark in the very speculative business of competing with syndicates and companies in the purchase of patents of this description from inventors raises questions which may possibly deserve exhaustive debate, but are scarcely suited to discussion at Question-time. As the hon. Member is aware, the Patent and Designs Act of last year contains provisions which it is hoped will be effective against the abuse of the monopoly conferred by a patent.

Netherlands Customs Duties.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is in possession of any information as to the articles on which customs duties are imposed by the Government of the Netherlands; and what was the yield of such duties during the year 1907.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Particulars of the rates of import duty levied in the Netherlands on the principal descriptions of merchandise are given in the Return entitled "Foreign Import Duties, 1907" (Cd. 3859 of 1907). The actual yield of the Netherlands Customs duties in 1906, the latest year for which I have the information, was £1,011,000, the Budget estimate of the yield for 1907 being £1,002,000.

Helmslade Harbour.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can say when the dredging promised in 1907 at Helmslade Harbour is to be proceeded with; and why nothing has yet been done to carry out the necessary dredging.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am informed by the local agent of the Duke of Sutherland, who is the proprietor of Helmsdale Harbour, that some dredging will be carried out next month. I understand that a suitable dredger could not be obtained in time last year, and that dredging could not be done during the winter.

Bass Rock Fog-horn.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the fog-horn is now in working order on the Bass Rock; and whether the whole of the work at the lighthouse on that island is now satisfactorily completed.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am informed by the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses that the work in connection with the establishment of a fog signal on the Bass Rock is now practically finished, and that they anticipate that the signal will be ready for use on and after the 20th instant.

Post Card Restrictions.

Mr. GIBBS (Bristol, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether any alteration can be made in the postal restrictions concerning post cards, on the grounds that, while post cards for correspondence may not exceed 5½ inches by 3½ inches, yet post cards for advertising purposes may be practically any size.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The maximum dimensions for post-cards in this country are practically the same as those prescribed for post-cards in the International service; and there does not seem any good reason for altering them.

Carnarvonshire Education Dispute.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether his attention has been called to the action of the Carnarvonshire local education authority in refusing to pay the proper salary, according to their published scale, to an uncertificated teacher employed at the Gyffin Church of England school, and in declining to pay the salary of a monitress at the same school, though the local education authority assented to the appointment of both the teacher and the monitress; and what action he proposes to take in the matter.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I have received a communication from the managers on this matter and have referred it to the local education authority for their observations.

Religious Teaching in Elementary Schools.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education, in view of the provisions of the Cowper-Temple clause and of the fact that since the repeal of Section 16 of the Education Act, 1870, the Board has no power to determine authoritatively the legality or otherwise of the teaching of any religious creed or formulary in council schools, if he will state what authority has that power; and whether there is the right to have the question determined judicially by the Courts.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The power of giving an authoritative interpretation of Section 14 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, as of all other statutes, in the absence of any express provision to the contrary, rests with the Courts of Law. If any ratepayer or other party interested is of the opinion that the section has in any particular case been contravened, it would appear to be open to him to apply for an injunction to restrain the authority from permitting the continuance of the breach. Similarly, if the Board are satisfied in any particular case that the section is being contravened, it will be their duty to take action under Article 25 (c) and Articles 29 and 30 of the Code. I would, at the same time, refer my hon. friend to the Answer given by my predecessor to a similar Question asked by the hon. Member for the Morley Division in April, 1907.

Scottish Bills—Expenses of Deputations.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will grant the Return on the Paper relating to the expenses of deputations respecting Scottish Bills.†

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I am prepared to assent to the proposed Return in principle, but some adjustment may be required in the wording, as to which I shall be glad to confer with my hon. friend.

Bonar Bridge Harbour, Sutherland.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether anything could be done to improve the harbour accommodation at Bonar Bridge, Sutherland, so that the inhabitants might have the use and benefit of water communication.

MR. SINCLAIR: I understand no fishery interests are involved, and there are no funds at the disposal of the Government available for expenditure on works of this nature.

Embo Water Supply.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether a supply of water has yet been provided for the people of Embo, Sutherland.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Answer is in the negative.

MR. ASHLEY: How do the inhabitants manage without a water supply?

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that something is done in the matter?

MR. SINCLAIR: It does not lie with the central authority to take action. I will look into it.

MR. MORTON: Has nothing been done yet?

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† Return of Expenses of Deputations to London from all bodies in Scotland administering public funds in connection with (a) Public Bills; (b) Private Bills; (c) the management of their administrative work during each of the last five years, arranged according to counties, and specifying town councils, county councils, parish councils, school boards, water trusts, gas commissions, educational trusts, and dock and harbour boards, etc.

MR. SINCLAIR: That is the Question I have answered.

LORD R. CECIL: Is there no power to coerce the local authority in Scotland into taking action?

MR. SINCLAIR: I can only say that the duty lies with the local authority.

MR. MORTON: Yet the right hon. Gentleman has written me several letters saying he will get this done.

Lochinver and Loch Clash Steamer Service.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he intends to replace the steamer which was put on in 1905 to run between Lochinver and Loch Clash, but was removed in 1906; and, if not, why not.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have only to refer my hon. friend to my Answer on this subject of 3rd June, 1907, which was to the effect that results did not justify the repetition of this experiment. Nothing has happened since to modify that view.

Scottish Unemployed Grants.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, whether Scotland had received any share of the Unemployed Grant for the year ending 31st March, 1908; if so, what was the amount, and what districts received it; and whether the money allowed for Scotland was in accordance with the equivalent grant system.

MR. SINCLAIR: The amount of the Unemployed Grant received for distribution by the Local Government Board for Scotland was £19,448. This sum was apportioned as follows:—

	£
Aberdeen	1,144
Dundee	140
Edinburgh	6,595
Glasgow	9,647
Govan	233
Greenock	1,155
Leith	200
Partick	259
Pollokshaws	75
	£19,448

The money allowed for Scotland was furnished on the basis of estimates prepared by the Local Government Board for Scotland from data supplied to them by the distress committees.

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of my Question?

MR. SINCLAIR: I do not know what my hon. friend means by the equivalent grant system. The money has been allotted according to the needs of the various localities.

MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that Scotland does get an equivalent grant in all cases?

MR. SINCLAIR: The hon. Gentleman may be sure I shall do my best in the interests of Scotland.

Massareene Estate Evicted Tenants.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if, under the recent settlement in the Massareene estate, any of the evicted tenants remain unreinstated; if so, whether he can give their names, the extent of their former holdings, and the reasons why they have not been restored; and whether he has any information as to what provision, if any, has been made to enable the reinstated tenants to rebuild or refit their homesteads, and to provide them with capital to make a fresh start in the cultivation of their holdings.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners inform me that four of the evicted tenants on the Massareene estate who in their opinion should be provided for, have not yet been reinstated, namely, James Daly, who held five acres; Christopher Loughran, who held 61 acres; John Bellew, 222 acres; and Patrick Mullan, 40 acres. Negotiations are proceeding with a view to reinstating these persons in their former holdings or providing them with new holdings. The hon. Member will find on pages 12 to 15 of the Return as to Evicted Tenants (Cd. 4093 of this session) full particulars of the expenditure sanctioned by the Commissioners for buildings and other purposes in the cases of the forty-four evicted tenants who have already been reinstated on this estate.

Ardee Labourers' Cottage Scheme.

MR. NOLAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the fact that at a recent inquiry under the Labourers Act, held in Ardee, County Louth, the Local Government Board inspector rejected schemes for twenty out of the thirty-four houses which the guardians proposed to erect under the Act; whether he is aware that the inspector refused to pass any scheme for the erection of a house to which the slightest objection was raised from any quarter; and whether he has furnished any explanation of his action to the Department.

MR. BIRRELL: It is presumed that the Question refers to the recent inquiry into the scheme of the Ardee No. 1 rural district council for the erection of 188 labourers' cottages. The inspector confirmed the scheme as regards 126 of the cottages, and his reasons for disallowing the remaining 62 cottages were duly communicated to the district council.

Imperial Cancer Fund.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the official announcement that the Imperial Cancer Fund is supported by the Government implies that this fund is supported and financed, mainly or partially, out of public funds; whether he is aware that urgent appeals for further financial assistance to this fund are being publicly made by its treasurer; and whether the Government can see its way to respond to this appeal by an adequate grant from the Exchequer.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): When I said that this fund was supported by the Government what I meant was that the Government accorded it practical assistance in the collection and transmission of information and specimens and in defraying the incidental expenses connected with this work. It is not directly financed out of public funds, and I doubt—though the question is one rather for the Chancellor of the Exchequer than for me—whether it would be possible to give it the exceptional favour of a grant from the Exchequer.

University Commission.

MR. RENDALL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is yet in a position to say whether, and when, a Royal Commission on the constitution of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge will be appointed; and, if so, whether he proposes to give such Commission power to consider the present methods of preserving order and inflicting punishment for breaches of the common law.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet in a position to say whether a case can be made out for the appointment of such a Commission. His Majesty's Government are still waiting before coming to a conclusion for what my noble friend Lord Crewe described in another place as an expression of thoughtful and competent academic opinion on the subject.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked as to the business for Thursday and Friday.

MR. ASQUITH said that it was proposed to take in Supply on Thursday, Army Votes 4, 3, 9, 2, 5, and 6. On Friday they would take the Friendly Societies Bill (Committee), Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill (Committee), Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill (Second Reading), Patents and Designs Bill (Second Reading), and Costs in Criminal Cases Bill (as amended by the Standing Committee).

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 180.]

Bill, as amended, re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 264.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A: Mr. Sheehy and Mr. John Redmond; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Halpin, and (in respect of the Coroners (Ireland) and of the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Amendment Bills): Mr. Lardner.

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B: Mr. Keir Hardie; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Gill.

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C: Mr. Claude Hay; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Post Office Savings Bank Bill): Mr. Brotherton.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

PLACES OF WORSHIP (LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT) BILL.

"To provide for the Enfranchisement of Leaseholds held in trust for the purposes of religious worship," presented by Mr. Massie; supported by Mr. Helme, Sir John Randles, Sir Albert Spicer, Mr. Walters, and Sir George White; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 30th June, and to be printed. [Bill 265.]

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [15th June], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'while it is desirable] that the State should organise aid for the unfortunate by establishing and assisting a general system of insurance against the principal risks of life, it is unjust to spend the taxpayers' money in giving subsidies to persons selected by arbitrary standards of age, income, and character.'"—(*Mr. Harold Cox.*)

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.), resuming his speech, said: When business was interrupted last night, I was about to say that I regret extremely that the Prime Minister has thought it necessary to give notice of his intention to impose a guillotine Motion on the discussion of this Bill in Committee, but I noted in the final answer which he gave to my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition he stated that the discussion by the House would be a free and unfettered discussion on the Motion for the closure, and as the only interpretation I can place on those words "free and unfettered" is that the debate upon the Resolution will be in the first place free from closure, and in the second place, unfettered by the appointment of the Government Whips to secure a result in accordance with the wishes of the Government, I hope we shall have an opportunity of making clear to the House when the time arrives the reasons why we think the action of the Prime Minister is undesirable and unnecessary. I regret that the time for our discussion is to be limited supposing that my hope is not realised, because this Bill stands in a very peculiar position. I at all events am one of those who believe that this Bill is the most important measure of social reform which has been introduced into this House since the year 1834. We heard something from the Secretary of War last night about the Act of 1834, and about the great Act of Elizabeth which it sought to amend, consolidate, and modernise, and also something about general Poor

Law and public health questions. I listened to that speech with increasing wonderment, because, having regard to the fact that the Government are naturally anxious to shorten as far as they legitimately can the debates in this House, I wondered that the Secretary for War was put up to make a speech which opened an entirely new and extremely controversial field. I venture to say that there is no one acquainted with local government, either from the point of view of administrators sitting on the Treasury Bench or of local administrators sitting on a local board, who will not read the speech of the Secretary for War with profound amazement. It was a travesty of the real history of local government institutions. I confess that instead of the views of the Secretary for War I should have liked to have heard those of the President of the Local Government Board upon this question, and I am especially sorry that he is absent from our debates, as I have just learned, through ill-health. I need hardly say that I hope the cause of his absence will be shortly removed. I regret his absence, too, because I cannot help thinking that if he had listened to the speech of the Secretary for War, he would have felt compelled to protest with that vigour for which he is so famous, and with the greater authority which he, rather than I, possesses, as the present President of the Local Government Board. I submit with confidence that no Bill has ever occupied so peculiar a position so early in its life as this Bill does to-day. It was introduced by the Prime Minister as a great step in the direction of social reform. It was advocated yesterday by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in very different terms, in apologetic terms, and the only part of it to which he firmly adhered is that part which is not to be found in the Bill we are now discussing, viz., the financial part, but is to be found in the Finance Bill. It was presented in a different form again late last night by the Secretary for War, who practically threw over all the finer sentiments and ideas connected with the pensioning of people and presented it as a new Bill which is to add a large number of a new kind of paupers to those already in existence. In these circumstances, having regard to the changes which have come over the Bill, it is evident that very little of the principle of the Bill remains, and everything will depend upon what results from our debate in Committee and from the changes which must be made in the Bill if the object of the Government is to be attained. The Chancellor of the Exchequer criticised us on this side of the House for our inaction when we were responsible for the Government. As I was President of the Local Government Board for five years during that time, I acknowledge at once that a large share of that responsibility must rest upon my shoulders. Although the Chancellor of the Exchequer has to provide the money, the preparation of any scheme of this kind must be in the first instance with the Local Government Board, and I do not hesitate to say why, apart altogether from finance, I was never in a position to recommend to my colleagues a scheme for the establishment of old-age pensions. I had as President of the Local Government Board the advantage of the inquiry by the Committee over which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon presided, and we had a vast amount of other information, but at all events I never found myself able to prepare a scheme which would not be open to the objection so forcibly urged against this one and admitted by the Government—namely, that if you attempt to establish a wholesale system of pensions, subject only to certain limitations, you would have the utmost difficulty in maintaining those limitations. If you cannot maintain those limitations, what becomes of the scheme itself? The scheme was originally to cost £6,000,000 in the first year; it is now to cost £7,500,000 within another twelve months. But unless you can eliminate the various classes who are aimed at by the restrictive clauses, it is impossible to estimate what will be the ultimate cost. The Secretary for War told us that in the present system there is an immense amount of overlapping between the guardians and the local authorities. I do not admit it. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman was fully conversant with our local government system, for if he had been I do not think he would have made a statement of that sort. It is very odd that while this Bill applies to the whole of the United Kingdom, the Secretary for War, who is a Scotsman sitting for a Scottish constituency, addressed the whole of his remarks to our local government in England and Wales, and had nothing to say about local government in Scotland and Ireland. Of Ireland I daresay he does not know a great deal, but I have no doubt he is conversant with Scotland. Of English and Welsh local government, if his speech yesterday is to be taken as an indication of his knowledge, he can have very little experience. So far from this Bill dealing in any satisfactory way with overlapping, it is likely to produce more overlapping and confusion, for it is setting up in the pension committee a new body side by side with existing authorities and doing work very analogous to that of the board of guardians. Is it going to get rid of overlapping? The Secretary of State for War, again, claimed that the Bill provides for classification, but there is no classification in it. I regret that the right hon. Gentleman dragged the Poor Law question into the debate at all, because unless the Bill is followed next session by a measure amending the Poor Law, it will have the most serious effect upon Poor Law administration. The advocates of pensions frequently enter into a wholesale denunciation of Poor Law administration, but I believe that denunciation to be absolutely unjust. There is no system of administration in the country which has undergone such beneficial and great changes as Poor Law administration. But when the Secretary of State for War says there is a vast improvement there owing to the differentiation between different classes of the poor, that statement is true only of the great urban unions, where you have a colossal rateable value, and therefore, an opportunity to embark on expenditure which is denied elsewhere; there you have a system of classification which is altogether adequate, but it is not true of any of the poor rural unions of the country. It is even assumed that the Poor Law administration means a wholesale condemnation of the workhouse, but those who say that cannot know how large is the proportion of those relieved who are relieved at home. Out of all the paupers relieved in this country, one in four only is relieved in the workhouse. In regard to the others, the system is as humane as it can be, although I believe that insufficient moneys are paid to outdoor paupers and, therefore, the condition of the recipients is not what it ought to be. Those are probably the saddest cases that the Poor Law has to deal with. I agree with the hon. Member for Preston that the saddest case is often not the case of the man who has reached or is approaching seventy years of age, but the case of the young man rendered by ill-health unable to maintain himself and family and compelled to come upon the Poor Law. What is the Bill going to do for him? Then again, what is the Bill going to do for the man between sixty and seventy who is unable to maintain himself? In reference to those classes the Bill confers no benefits whatever. What are you going to do with the cases of people over seventy? You are going to give them a pension of 5s. a week. I am afraid the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he said that the conditions of the Bill might be made more elastic, did not apply to the amount of the pension. But I confess that, so long as this is a Bill merely intended to bridge over the interim before a regular system of pensions is set up, I think, the elasticity ought to apply to the amount of the pension. Five shillings in one case will make all the difference between misery and comparative comfort, but in many cases will be altogether inadequate. There is nobody in this House acquainted with our country villages who does not know that the most difficult cases to deal with are those of either old men or old women who are not sufficiently infirm to be sent to the workhouse infirmary, but who are unable to provide for themselves, who are without kith and kin, and for whom it is extremely difficult to find a caretaker or a home, not because of the amount of money to be paid, but because naturally, following upon their suffering there comes querulousness and sometimes real bad temper, and sometimes they require a considerable amount of attention morning and evening, and in their own homes or those of their neighbours, it is impossible, not for a question of 5s., but for a larger payment than that, to find accommodation for them. What do you do with them? Under the present law they can only be sent to the workhouse. They naturally hate it, not because they believe the workhouse to be a cruel place, but because their nature teaches them to resent the idea of being sent to a place which they regard as a place of disgrace. For them, this Bill will do nothing. The pensions of 5s. given to them might just as well not be given at all. It would have been quite easy under this Bill to have had provisions which would have dealt with the classes to which I have referred. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a speech yesterday which undoubtedly impressed the whole House. We are all familiar with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's courage and forcefulness, but yesterday for the first time we heard a speech from him delivered in whispered humbleness. It was an apology for the position in which the Government find themselves in regard to this Bill. It was a series of excuses, and then a plea that the House would treat the Bill tenderly for the reason that it was going to make the lot of 500,000 people better. There was only one point on which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was firm. He was ready to give way on a variety of points, but in regard to finance he was adamant. He said, "Whatever you do with this Bill, you must not add to the cost which is going to be laid upon the State." He dealt with the contributory scheme in a way that certainly struck me as remarkable. He told us that one of his reasons for objecting to a contributory scheme is that everybody contributes at present by the taxes which they pay. I think the members of our great Civil Service who read that speech this morning must have thought it augured well for themselves, because if a pension is to be regarded as the result of contributions made by taxes, then surely our Civil servants, whose salaries are well understood to be below the standard of their deserts because they have pensions attached to them, will hope that their payment in taxes will be regarded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as a justification for an increase in their pensions. He went on to say that the labour which the workpeople of this country give from day to day is in itself a justification for a pension. Surely that is a remarkable argument. Then we are to assume that they are not being properly paid at present by their employers. If the pension is to be paid by the State as a sort of make-up for indifferent wages paid by past employers then this pension is not a payment to the workman but an endowment of the master. I listened to this argument with profound amazement, and I came to the conclusion that the right hon. Gentleman has proved himself a very apt pupil of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. What really is the choice that we have before us in dealing with this question? There are, I believe, only three schemes by which you can deal with the question. There is, first of all, the contributory scheme which was illustrated yesterday by the hon. Member for Preston, who took as his illustration the German system; there is the scheme of the Government, of State pensions with no contribution by the individual, no assistance from any friendly society; and the third is the one which I believe to be the right one—I do not pretend that there are not many difficulties in the way of its success, but I believe they are not insuperable—and that is a combination between the contributory scheme and the scheme of the Government. Whatever scheme you have it is quite obvious you must have one which will make some provision for those who are of an age now when they cannot come into any contributory scheme—those who are stricken down by illness or those who for other reasons cannot become participants—but I refuse to believe that it is impossible to find a scheme which would combine these two elements, contributions on the part of the individual and a method by which those who are very poor or sick will be brought in and derive some benefit. That, I believe, would be a more successful solution of this question than a wholesale contributory scheme which would exclude some of those for whom we must make provision. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that everybody had abandoned the contributory scheme; but so far all these schemes have been considered without the enormous advantage which we now enjoy of a deliberate offer by the Government of a fixed sum of money, which must grow from natural causes, and which must grow certainly if the restrictions which you seek to impose cannot be maintained. Therefore, any scheme, however well devised, means an increasing demand upon the public exchequer. How do you seek to limit this scheme? By saying that you will exclude people who have not given proof of their desire to maintain themselves. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he was willing materially to alter that, and that what he really wants to do is to exclude the wastrel, the ne'er-do-weel, who does nothing for himself or for the district in which he lives. Everybody will agree with him there, but here there is no attempt really to secure that result. If you are introducing a scheme which is only to act as a temporary measure, to pave the way for a permanent scheme, then I say get rid altogether of any process of inquisition. I do not believe the working classes of this country will stand the system which in many cases necessitates the most painful inquiry into their past history. The hon. Member for Preston pointed out that that involves giving a pension to everybody, whether he be honest or dishonest, but I think it is possible to avoid that result, although I do not think the Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to friendly societies, which seems to have been hastily conceived, will have this result. The suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with regard to friendly societies was that every man who had been a member of a friendly or benefit society before the age of sixty was to have a statutory right to a pension. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer forgets that twenty-five or thirty years ago in many of the smaller villages there came a collapse of the old variety of village clubs, which had never been financially sound, which had been conducted on no actuarial principle, and which had included the most pernicious habit of dividing out their funds at the end of every year. Many a man in the villages who in his early days had joined one of these clubs found that so soon as he needed their help they could not give it because they were bankrupt. What was the effect of that upon the younger men in these villages? The result was that in the country villages it was impossible to get one man in ten to join a friendly society. It was all very well to tell him that if he had joined a society he would not have met the fate that overtook his older neighbours, but could anyone wonder, with this example staring him in the face, that he should decline to join a friendly society? Every one of these men, who are in no sense to blame for not having joined a friendly society, would not be touched by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Amendment. If you are going to exclude the wastrel and the ne'er-do-well, you must do it by simpler language than that. You have got already in the great urban workhouses the system of classification which the right hon. Gentleman seeks to import into this Bill. If you take the great union of West Derby, Liverpool, or any of the great unions in the Metropolis or the provinces, you will find the only system of classification which works satisfactorily, so far as I am able to ascertain. Before the Committee over which my right hon. friend the Member for Wimbledon presided evidence was given by a witness with regard to the working of the West Derby Union. He showed how the classification there had been arrived at. There they divided the people into the deserving and undeserving. The deserving people were put into the better-class houses, and the undeserving class were put into the lower houses, where the strictest conditions were imposed in regard to their labour and modes of living. There should be no difficulty in arriving at a form of words which would exclude the wastrel, but beyond that you cannot go. I venture to say in regard to those whom you are taking in you must be very tender indeed as to the limitations imposed, or the language you select in order to exclude certain people from becoming participants in the benefits of the scheme. When you come to deal with a scheme for the future you are in a totally different position. What is the position in regard to a man of seventy? If you exclude him by hastily adopted language, you are punishing him at the end of his life for errors which may have been committed in the earlier part of it. Surely that can hardly be called justice. It would be regarded as very severe treatment. What you want is to start a man with the knowledge that two things are open to him—one is the power of contributing to a fund which will provide him with the means of subsistence when too old to work for himself, and the other that if he makes a contribution the State will add to that contribution, and, therefore, he will be able to secure a pension direct from the State if he will conduct himself as a decent and law-abiding citizen. Is it impossible to devise such a scheme? We were told that the German system was impossible of adoption here. I venture to say that anyone who will read the reports which are open to all of us as to the German, the Danish, or the Belgian system, will come to the conclusion that the German system, not only in itself, but because the German people are more similar to our own than the people of other countries, is one which could well be adopted in this country with certain modifications. Surely the figures given by the hon. Member for Preston yesterday were startling. Immense numbers have already derived benefit from the German scheme and immense numbers are joining the societies. The fact is that you have to bridge over the difficulty as between those who can subscribe and those who cannot. Are not these striking facts that convince us that something like the German system is better for us in the future? The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed yesterday to denounce any contributory scheme as impossible. [Cries of "No."] At all events, the right hon. Gentleman began by doing so. Nobody has ever suggested that a man over seventy should contribute, because obviously he has reached a time when he should receive a pension without having to contribute. Certainly I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that a contributory scheme was impossible. He referred to the views held by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and said that everyone who had considered the question had abandoned a contributory scheme. He also referred to the Report of the Committee over which my right hon. friend the Member for Wimbledon presided. The Chancellor of the Exchequer knows, as we all know, that the recommendations of Commissions are not always carried out. I cannot remember a single instance where it has ever happened that the Report of a Commission or a Committee, however able it might be, has been exactly followed out by those who ultimately had to deal with it. It would be a poor compliment to a Government or to this House if you simply adopted the recommendations of a Committee, and, without altering a word of them, put them into statutes. An extremely able Committee, presided over by Lord Rothschild, recommended that the age when old-age pensions should begin should be sixty-five. That Committee came to the deliberate conclusion that it would be impossible to maintain the limitation even at the age of sixty-five. If you are going to take your stand upon the findings of Commissions and Committees, you will find it impossible to propose any scheme at all. If we are told that the proposal of this scheme is only to get over the present difficulty, and that we are to consider the whole question of pensions in future untrammelled by anything in this Bill, the whole case will be materially altered. It is for the future and not the immediate present that those who object to the plan of the Government are concerned.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): What I said yesterday was that in my judgment it would be quite impossible to impose a contributory system upon the working classes to make provision for old age, but I never expressed any opinion as to the merits or demerits of a contributory system, when infirmity or sickness is in question, which is a totally different thing.

MR. WALTER LONG: Of course it is a totally different thing. We know already that 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 of the working classes make provision for old age, and make provision in other ways for the future. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thinks it is impossible to secure from the working classes a contribution in respect of old-age pensions. If it is possible for the German labourer, why is it impossible for the English labourer to make a contribution? [AN HON. MEMBER: Because we are not

Germans.] That seems to me rather a poor reason, because if it means anything it means that Englishmen are inferior. That is a contention I will never make myself responsible for, and it is one which I will never listen to without endeavouring to refute it. If the Germans can do it, it is a fair presumption that the English could do it also. It is a fact that in a certain number of cases now provision is made for old age, as well as for payments in respect of death and sickness in connection with existing societies. There is a society which has grown in a most startling way in the last few years. It was founded by a very excellent Member of this House, Mr. George Holloway, who sat for one of the divisions of Gloucestershire. He gave the utmost attention and study to the question of thrift among the working classes. The society he started was called the Conservative Workingmen's Benefit Society. Anybody who would take the trouble to read the rules of that society, or the prize essay written by Mr. Holloway on old-age pensions, would find that he had a scheme under which for modest payments provision could be made for old age. That scheme had the enormous advantage that it gave graduated benefits in respect of graduated payments. If the Government desired to establish a permanent system of old-age pensions for the future, why not take the friendly societies, such as the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows, the Foresters, and some others, into their confidence. I know the objection to that is that it involves a Government guarantee of the stability of the society. Of course, there are objections to every proposal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said yesterday that the Government proposal does not go beyond the recommendations of what is called the Chaplin Committee because that Committee recommended that the cost should be divided between the local rates and the Imperial Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman asked whether anyone would get up and say that the local authorities would be prepared to return the money if the Government made provision for pensions. Nobody would be prepared to refund the money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us yesterday in his speech that the exclusion of those who were in receipt of Poor Law relief after 1st January this year was a vanishing disability and that it applied only to the towns. What does that mean ? It means that you will add by degrees to the number of your pensioners, and that the additional cost approximately will be between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 a year. All experience has shown that side by side with the erection of self-help societies and benefit societies, there comes the prolongation of life to the classes concerned. Therefore there is every presumption that those now in receipt of relief will ultimately become pensioners. I do not see how it should not be so. It is, of course, conjecture, as much must be in connection with this question of self-help, but I think you may assume that a large proportion of those persons would ultimately come upon the provision scheme. Assuming that one-half did—£1,500,000—that would be money taken off the rates of the country. I have always been a strong advocate of local taxation reform, believing that the State should pay for State services in local districts. I have never sought to put our case on unfair grounds, but if you turn those who are paupers into pensioners, local taxation reformers would be perfectly prepared to agree to the distribution of the cost between the State, the local authorities, and the individuals who are to benefit. An hon. Member below the gangway told us yesterday that the German system could not be applied in this country because the people here were too poor. I listened to that argument with some astonishment, and I felt deep sympathy with the hon. Member for Preston, who is one of the most earnest and able advocates of free trade and never loses an opportunity in this House to support his views. What must he, who always maintains that under free trade the English working man is much better off than the German working man, have thought when he found some Gentlemen who agreed with him in his free trade views saying that the English workman was too poor to pay for what the German workman could! How curiously mixed hon. Gentlemen opposite are in regard to this particular policy. One day they tell us that the Englishman is much better off under free trade than the

German is under protection, while the next day they tell us that the Englishman is so much worse off than the German that he cannot afford the payment of a small proportion of the contribution towards a pension for his old days when he can no longer work. If that is the strongest argument that can be used against a contributory system, it is not one which is likely to weigh very much with the people of this country. I believe that the ultimate solution of this question lies in the combined system to which I have referred. I believe it is not impossible, if the Government are in a position to find a sufficiency of money—if they are prepared to find this number of millions which will pay a certain proportion of the ultimate pensions which the people are to get—for them to be able to devise a scheme which would combine the friendly societies' superannuation allowances with their own contribution. That, I say, is the one plan which in all respects would be best for the people of this country. I do not myself believe that if a system of old-age pensions is carefully and prudently thought out and established on these lines it will interfere with the friendly societies. But if it is imprudently conceived and hurriedly determined upon, then I believe it will seriously impair the friendly societies. A Gentleman below the gangway said something just now to the effect that the fact that this Bill is going to benefit 500,000 poor people ought to be sufficient to command our support. But when I remember that the result of the benefit of these 500,000 people may be and certainly must be to injure the friendly societies at the cost of great injury to several millions of people, I hold that the good that would happen to the 500,000 would be far too dearly bought in the interest of the nation and of the people specially concerned themselves. I believe myself that most of our working-men are proud of the fact that they make a contribution themselves for their old-age through these friendly societies. I believe that they have not abandoned all hope of arriving at a scheme which will combine the help of the State with the active work of the individuals themselves. I believe such a scheme is still possible, and I hope with all my heart that nothing the Government will do in connection with this Bill will make it more difficult to arrive at a plan such as I have referred to and for which the hon. Member for Preston contended. The hon. Member for Derbyshire, in a speech to which we all listened with great pleasure, also referred to the friendly societies and to the work done by private employers with regard to the provision of pensions for their employees. This Bill, if made a permanent instrument for providing a scheme of pensions for all workers for all time, must strike a heavy blow at that system which is preferable to both employers and employed, and of which the employed are as proud as the employers. These are the dangers that are before us which the Government measure does no more than bridge over for the present without laying down settled principles for the future. The Bill may do some good if it is materially altered in Committee, but if it is not altered it will do irremediable harm to the lessons taught by the administration of the Poor Law and by the promotion of thrift and self-help. If the Government will remember not to legislate hastily, for my part, although I largely share the views of the hon. Member for Preston and of the hon. Member behind me, and believe firmly that a contributory scheme is by far the best in the interest of the people of this nation, I cannot vote for the Amendment which would have the effect of destroying the Bill and prevent that discussion and debate which I cannot help hoping may result in something really beneficial and really helpful being done for those whose interest we are all anxious to promote.

*Mr. BURT (Morpeth) said he did not intend to discuss the details of the Bill now before the House, the principle of which he heartily supported. With his usual generosity—he would almost say magnanimity—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin had taken upon himself the blame, if there was any blame, and the responsibility for the fact that the late Government of which he was a prominent member for a long period, had never, after all their promises and professions, attempted to deal earnestly with the subject of old-age pensions. He did not think that the Leader of the Opposition would allow the right hon. Gentleman to accept the whole responsibility or the main part of the responsibility for that neglect. However that might be, they now had for the first time a practical measure before them providing for old-age pensions. As many Members around him and opposite were anxious to take part in the debate he would confine his remarks within as moderate a compass as possible; but he felt that he could hardly be silent on an occasion of this kind. He had taken a great interest in the subject of old-age pensions for a large number of years and had been associated with the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow, the hon. Member for Burnley, and the hon. Member for South West Manchester in the National Committee appointed to deal with it, mainly on the lines laid down by Mr. Charles Booth. His friend the Member for Burnley had paid a well-merited tribute to Mr. Charles Booth, who with great disinterestedness, great ability and persistency, and at much cost of money, time and health—he might almost say of life—had devoted himself for many years to the promotion of this question of old-age pensions. The subject, for the first time, was now practically before the House of Commons, introduced by a responsible Government. He would like in a sentence or two to show, as far as he could, some appreciation of the Government's action in bringing forward this measure. He would specially like to recognise the devotion of his right hon. friend the Prime Minister to this subject in not only introducing it in his Budget speech, but in also laying its foundation by wise and careful finances. Mr. Booth's scheme, it was pretty well known, was non-contributory. It was also a universal scheme, and was to begin at sixty-five years of age. It was moreover to be entirely dissociated from the administration of the Poor Law. Not all, but, he would say, the chief of these provisions were embodied in the Bill now before the House. With regard to the non-contributory part of it, he knew well that a great deal could be said, as his right hon. friend who had just addressed the House had contended, in favour of contribution; and his hon. friend the Member for Preston, in a speech of great ability, eloquence, and ingenuity, entered at length on that subject yesterday. He would like his hon. friend to be in a position, not only to criticise a scheme of old-age pensions, but also to deal constructively with one. If the hon. Gentleman occupied that position, he had no doubt he would show great constructive ability, but if he had to meet anyone with half his fertility in raising objections and one-tenth of his ingenuity in discovering difficulties—then he feared the hon. Gentleman would have a very hard task before him in carrying his measure through Parliament. The present Bill was acknowledged to be incomplete. There were certain restrictions and qualifications, some of which would, no doubt, be necessary—they would, of course, exclude criminals and habitual drunkards from pensions—but many of the other objections and disqualifications would no doubt be modified, and some of them in course of time swept away altogether. A great deal might be said in favour of a contributory scheme, and he himself had hesitated for some time as to whether he should abandon that principle, but everybody who had considered the matter carefully had ultimately given up the notion of a contributory scheme. The great defects of a contributory scheme were that it could not immediately come into operation; and that it would exclude thousands and tens of thousands, of the most necessitous cases. That was a fatal objection to the contributory scheme. He was glad to hear the hon. Member for Preston, and he showed his characteristic courage in doing so, considering who supported his criticisms on this Bill, vindicate the principles of free trade. The hon. Member said, and said truly, that the chief need for working-men was to raise their wages. To that he entirely agreed, and it had been his endeavour, not always with success, as it had been that of many of his colleagues opposite and on the Ministerial side of the House, to raise the worker's wage. It was a vital question, and one which which greatly concerned the whole community. If wages were raised the worker was benefited and the employer also. It might, at any rate, be said that an employer was always flourishing and obtaining the greatest profits when he was paying the highest wages. But he failed to see how wages could be raised by Act of Parliament, or how a better wage could affect the interests of the worn-out toiler who had ceased to work. Parliament might increase their expenditure by bad legislation or administration, or they might by good legislation and administration benefit the working class by diminishing their expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said there was no census of the wages paid in this country; but some of those who had gone carefully into the matter had come to the conclusion that probably one-third of the workers in this country were receiving 20s. or less per week. Sir Robert Giffin told the Labour Commission which sat some time ago that there were 1,750,000 male workers in this country who were not earning more than 20s. a week. How could those men be expected to save? He did not know if many Members of this House had tried to live and bring up a family on 20s. a week, but he could speak with confidence when he said that it was no easy task. As it was much easier to criticise than to construct, he might be permitted to indulge in a little criticism on his own account. There were some portions of the Bill which, in his opinion, required some modification. With regard to the provision as to pauperism, he would like to see some modification, and with regard to the income limit perhaps a sliding scale system might be adopted, and he understood that so far as the Government were concerned they were not entirely averse to such a principle. He did not believe for a moment that the provision of pensions would, as had been suggested, encourage thriftlessness. The English were credited with a want of imagination. That was a libel. Anybody who came into the House and listened to the debates would know that if this House was typical of Englishmen, whatever else they might lack they were certainly not devoid of imagination. But could anyone imagine that a man in the prime of life would become less thrifty than he otherwise would be by the prospect of getting a pension of 5s. a week which, added to 10s., would bring his income up to 15s.? As to the general principle, he thought that if a man who had been paying into a trade union or a friendly society which had a superannuation fund found that he was worse off than he otherwise would be, thrift would certainly to that extent be discouraged. Therefore, in his opinion, the Government should consider the introduction of some sliding scale. The glory of these workmen's institutions was their inculcation of the principle of self-help. He knew of societies which had paid hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, in superannuation. They did not want to be relieved of that obligation but they wanted to see that their members were not put into a worse position because they were members of a friendly society. That was a matter which ought to be closely watched by the Government. Although he was not entirely satisfied with this Bill, he would support the Government through thick and thin in their effort to carry it through, and he would not do anything to endanger its passage. It was, in his opinion, an honest and straightforward step in the right direction and one which, he believed, would do much to benefit the aged workers, and ultimately he felt perfectly sure it would develop into a good substantial Parliamentary provision for the veterans of industry throughout the country.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester) thought that this Parliament was indeed to be congratulated on the fact that at last a Government had been found to take over the responsibility of introducing a Bill for old-age pensions. Although he could not agree with the whole of the details of the Bill he would certainly support the Government on the Second Reading if the Amendment now before the House went to a division. He thanked the Government for their courage, foresight, and effort to grapple with this problem, which had been too long shelved and shirked on account of its great difficulties. He did not think the solution was rendered more easy by delay, because at the present time, with the pressure upon the worker becoming every day greater, the effort of the worker was consumed, and he was worn out and became aged long before his time. That side of the problem would have to be dealt with.

There was no question which aroused greater interest than this among the masses of the people, and there was a deep feeling existing in all classes of the community that the great wrong existed in this rich country of permitting the injustice and the impolicy of making old age what it was to-day, a prospect of misery to many of the industrial poor. There was no power of redress. They had the Poor Law, one of the unfortunate remnants given to us by Whig Governments in days gone by, and all that that system enabled us to do was to offer relief to the destitute and to the wastrels; it gave them comforts which they had never possessed up to the time of their entering the workhouse. Thousands of the industrial poor of the country, to his own knowledge, preferred to endure untold hardships rather than share in what they looked upon as the degrading hospitality of the workhouse. The Government had brought in a Bill to start old-age pensions, which were to be given as a man's right and not as a charity. There would be no stigma of reproach nor anything in the nature of dishonour attached to old-age pensions. For his own part he was a supporter of the main principles of this Bill; he believed in non-contributory old-age pensions; he believed that all the arguments told in an overwhelming way against any contributory system; and he had heard no argument during the two days debate on the Bill which gave any leading or light whatsoever for a contributory scheme. If a contributory scheme were adopted they would be falling back into the very errors of the Poor Law. They would recognise classification, and all that inspection which would immediately entail the appointment of a huge staff of officials to inquire into facts connected with the applicants for pensions, and what should be given to the deserving poor would go instead to create a new army of officials. The Poor Law as it existed to-day cost £15,000,000, and no less than £1,300,000 of that amount went to the payment of officials and the provision of the superannuation attaching to their offices. Then, again, he took the case of the agricultural labourer, whose wage on the average was 14s. a week. It was almost impossible for that man to keep his wife and family respectably, and at the same time contribute to his friendly society, provide for funeral expenses, and contribute to the old-age pension fund. That, to his mind, was one of the great difficulties connected with a contributory scheme. He would like to know how they were going to deal with the large class of unskilled labourers in the towns, who never earned more than 24s. a week, and who, although they were not casuals, were out of employment during a great deal of their time. These unskilled labourers in the towns, after providing for their families and the rent, had to keep a balance out of their pittance as provision for a "rainy day," which came with certainty and regularity in the course of their lives, whether through the condition of trade or otherwise. They put a little aside against the recurrent and long periods of unemployment, and it took them all their time to keep their heads above water. It was rare, when they again got work, that they had any money left, and how could they, in such conditions, find the means to contribute to old-age pensions? They knew, also, that very many of these people rarely reached the age which would qualify them for the pension. Then they had been asked, How about the women? He had not heard a single answer to the question. In the case of the wives of the unskilled labourers, it would be impossible for the husband to contribute out of his wages to old-age pensions. In the name of patience, what opportunity to make provision was given to women who were the wives of those who belonged to that class of the community? It was an absolute impossibility. Then, again, there was the proposal of having a contributory scheme and a non-contributory scheme running alongside one another. How did they think such a proposition would be treated in districts where the people who were to be candidates for aged poor pensions always looked upon these matters with suspicion? They would require to have it very clearly explained to them why one individual got a pension for nothing, while another had to contribute towards the pension he received. At the same time, in order to give proper effect to the contributory scheme, they would require officials who would be draining the funds which should go to the aged poor themselves. Lastly, they were told that the character of these individuals would be undermined if they got a pension. Those who talked of undermining the character of individuals who were living for the most part lives of industry for a very small wage, knew very little of what they were talking about. He saw no chance of the character of these industrious citizens being tampered with or lowered because in a rich country like this some provision was made for them in their declining years as a reward for their services. He was glad to understand that the Government were prepared to alter the fixed limit and to adopt a sliding scale. He believed that the result of the fixed limit would have been to discourage instead of encouraging thrift; it would have been the worst possible thing that could be done. He would like to see eradicated from the Bill the inhuman proposal that because two old women, to make ends meet, domiciled together, therefore they were to be docked of part of their pensions, and reduced to 3s. 9d. a week each. As regarded married couples, why could they not do in this Bill what was done in New Zealand, and let them have the maximum pension, including income, for husband and wife? By that means they would get rid of the unpleasant proposal of saying that a man and wife living together were to be penalised, while the man and wife living apart were to get the full pension. If they had a maximum of 12s. or 13s. a week for the individual, it would be perfectly possible with the sliding scale to make the maximum 18s. a week, leaving to ordinary individuals, whether old men or old women, the opportunity of getting their full pension, whatever it might be, and clubbing together and doing what was possible to make their declining years happy and cheerful. One of the objections to the sliding scale was that it was likely to lead to inquisitorial proceedings. The inquiry, in this instance, however, would not be as to the character of the individual, but as to his means. It could not be extended to a great number of persons, because the vast majority of the old people who applied would be those who asked for the 5s. a week; it would be only a small proportion of people who would have to be docked of a portion of the pension. He was very glad indeed that the Government had seen their way to give effect to the sliding scale, because he believed it would help thrift, and would remove some of the greatest objections which he felt at the present time. Another point to which he would like to refer was the question of the age-limit. They had been told repeatedly that this Bill was a great experiment, it was only a trial, and that as experience was gained it was to be developed. To his mind, an age-limit of seventy might give a chance of test in the country, but in the towns it was a pure sham and a mockery. This statement was substantiated by Returns, and still further by a speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which he said—

> "As to the age-limit, somebody had said something about seventy. That had been tried in Germany, and what had happened was this: The rural population had benefited to some extent, but in the towns the seventy limit was perfectly useless."

And he went on to say that if they were going to face the question it must be a limit of sixty-five. He hoped in Committee to move an Amendment that, at all events in urban districts with a population of 20,000 or upwards, the age-limit should be reduced to sixty-five. There was a Return as to the length of life in some of the best trades. In the bricklayers the average age for superannuation was sixty-three, and the average time the people used it was up to sixty-seven, because that was the average age of death. With the compositors superannuation commenced at sixty-three and a-half, and the average life terminated at sixty-seven-and-a-half. With engine makers the superannuation age was sixty-three and three-quarters and the average death at seventy-two. With engineers, superannuation was at sixty-three and average death at seventy. But if they came to particular trades or callings and took the average life of the workmen engaged, hardly one of them exceeded the age of sixty. Therefore, it would be a pure mockery if they were in earnest in their desire to gain experience of these old-age pensions in the towns, if they did not reduce the limit to such an age as would make it possible for the Act to be applied. Lastly, he desired to call attention to the very cruel clause dealing with disqualification owing to Poor Law relief in the present year. He had had the honour of representing for ten years a great agricultural constituency. He was intimately acquainted with the friendly societies and with the lives of some of the individuals in that district. In that constituency in the days gone by, when the agricultural labourer was only earning 7s., 8s., or 9s. a week, he had no Oddfellows' or Foresters' Society to contribute to. The friendly society which he joined was the village friendly society. Unfortunately in these last ten years the number of these friendly societies which had gone bankrupt and shut up was simply deplorable. He had cases of individuals who in the last two years, for the first time in their life, had come under the Poor Law and were receiving a miserable pittance of 2s. 6d. a week, and in one case a few loaves of bread. These men ranged in age from seventy-four, to eighty-two. Some of them had contributed to these friendly societies, one since he was nine years of age. The only thing open for him to indulge in was thrift. The club was closed through no fault of his own. Was this man in his seventy-seventh or seventy-eighth year, because, forsooth, in this year he was taking 2s. 6d. outdoor relief a week, to be told he was to remain in that desperate position as a pauper and to have no account taken of his thrift during these fifty or sixty years in which he had subscribed to the only club which was within his reach to join? He could not but think the Prime Minister and those responsible would give serious consideration to these very hard cases. If he were treating this as a party question he would wish that these blots on the Bill should remain, but it was because he gave the Government full credit for their ability and courage in grappling with this great and difficult question that he hoped some means would be given to the pension committee to deal with these specific cases where men had exercised thrift and had ceased to belong to a friendly society solely through the bankruptcy of the society, so that when they had been members of such a society for fifty or sixty years they should not be precluded from participation in the pension scheme simply because they had taken 2s. 6d. a week poor relief. He hoped the Government would have a great majority for this great emancipating measure, and he was glad to think the privilege was given him to vote for what he believed was one of the greatest social reforms of this generation.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) congratulated the hon. Member for Worcester on the truly enlightened spirit of his observations. Certainly a change had come over the spirit of the House since yesterday, and it was gratifying to see the practical note of unanimity that had been struck to-day. The hon. Gentleman was a member of a respected Irish family but did not pretend to speak for Irish interests. Therefore he took the opportunity of offering a few observations with regard to this great measure. In the first place, he desired to say that this Bill was generally approved of in Ireland. It was approved by the county councils, the district councils, the trade associations, and the Trade Union Congress of Ireland, which assembled only a few days ago in Dublin and unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the principle of the Bill; but the Congress expressed a strong opinion that there ought to be some modification of the Bill, and that the age-limit was too high. They suggested sixty as the age-limit. He left that for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to chew as a somewhat delicious morsel. They recommended some other changes which he trusted they would be able to bring before the House in Committee; but, on the whole, there had not been, as far as he could make out, one single note of dissent with regard to the general provisions of this very great reform. The House would be struck, no doubt, by a remark of the hon. Member as to the impossibility of certain classes of the community contributing to their old-age pensions. He had mentioned that the wages of agricultural labourers in this country were 14s.; but a Return had just been issued showing that the average wages of agricultural labourers in Ireland were 9s. to 11s. or 12s. at the highest, and there were footnotes of a very striking character admitting on many occasions that the wages were 1s. a week less in the winter season. What chance had any agricultural labourer with a wife and family, earning 9s. a week when in full employment, of contributing towards old-age pensions? But there was worse than that. The agricultural labourers of Ireland suffered from intermittent work—casual work—and that was due very largely to economic causes over which they had no control—the fall in the price of agricultural produce and the gradual transition of large tracts of the country from a state of tillage, which gave considerable employment, to grass and pasturage, which gave very little employment. The average wages of the Irish agricultural labourer made it impossible that he should contribute anything whatever towards the formation of an old-age pension fund, and as far as they were concerned the clever and ingenious argument of the hon. Member for Preston absolutely fell to the ground. They could not save towards old age, neither could the small farmers, because there was a steady decline in the returns from agricultural produce owing to foreign competition and the continued inclemency of the seasons. The small farmer, after paying his rent and other demands, struggled on from year to year amidst all his difficulties, but could never provide money for his old age. The ambition of a small farmer in Ireland was to be able to save a little money to get either a farm for his son or a marriage portion for his daughter; and in the great majority of cases the small farmer and his wife looked forward to being able to live with a married son or daughter. This scheme would be to the small farmers in Ireland a very great boon indeed, because it was impossible for them to save anything. By giving to the labourer and the small farmer this small but steady income of 5s. a week they would be doing much towards smoothing the latter days of their lives. The boon was considered of great value in this country, but it was of even greater value in Ireland, because a large number of the poor people of Ireland almost preferred the grave to the workhouse. There was no more striking instance of the crass stupidity of this country in dealing with Ireland than the manner in which the present workhouse system was forced upon Ireland. In 1826 an Irish Royal Commission took evidence, and in 1836 they issued a Report recommending reforms, some of which had since been carried, in regard to the necessity of erecting agricultural labourers' dwellings, technical instruction, the reclamation of land, forestry, and other things for which Ireland was still clamouring. At the instigation of one English gentleman who visited Ireland for about six weeks that valuable Report was set aside and the present workhouse system, with its terrible train of evil and degradation, was forced upon Ireland against the protest of her public men and the entire force of public opinion in Ireland. That same feeling with regard to the workhouse remained amongst the labourers and artisans of Ireland to-day. Owing to the poverty of Ireland, its smaller trade and its fewer factories and workshops, employment in that country was very intermittent, and the artisans and labourers suffered more from lack of employment than the artisans in this country, and it was impossible for them to put anything by for old-age pensions. To those men an old-age pension would be valuable because their family affections were strong, and it was a great privilege to them to be able to live with their children and be supported honourably and decently among their own kith and kin. The hon. Member for Preston was against this Bill because he thought it proceeded on wrong lines, whilst the Labour Members objected because it did not go far enough. He joined with his hon. friends below the gangway up to a certain point. He was in favour of the age-limit being reduced to sixty-five, but he desired to know where the money was going to be found. He did not like to see a great social reform condemned because it did not go as far as they wished. They must begin at the beginning, and he asked hon. Members frankly to give a more cordial support to a measure embodying the commencement of a great principle opening up a new era of social reform. There were several directions in which they might look to find money for an enlargement of the present scheme. He would like to see land values and monopolies taxed, and there were many other directions in which taxation for social reform might be increased. This would be necessary in order to provide not only the £7,000,000 required under this Bill but also a considerably larger sum for the veterans of industry in the days that were to come. They would also have to practice those principles of retrenchment without which it was impossible to carry out any great social reform.

*MR. STUART (Sunderland) said he thought that so far the criticisms of this measure had been extremely fair and reasonable. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin had given the House a very frank and fair criticism of the Bill, not from the point of view of an opponent but as one who had done a great deal himself towards the establishment of something of the kind. The hon. Member who spoke last but one on the opposite side was also reasonable and just in his criticisms, and he was sure his suggestions would be taken into consideration on all sides of the House. Yesterday the Government was subjected to somewhat of a cross-fire, not only of criticism, but almost of opposition. In the first place, no doubt there were a certain number in this House who objected to the principle of old-age pensions. At any rate they so entirely objected to the principle of non-contributory pensions that they were prepared to vote against this Bill. Personally, he did not intend to deal with their arguments. Then there was another class of almost opposition to the Bill, which came from a quarter of the House which supported the idea and principle of old-age pensions on a non-contributory basis. Then there were objections taken by those hon. Members who felt that the Bill did not go far enough. They were threatened with a number of Amendments some of which, although not all, if carried, would certainly kill the Bill if they did not kill the Government. He was of opinion that a great deal remained to be done to improve this measure. He had had to deal with a number of workpeople and had been obliged to think out for a number of years this question of old-age pensions. He was perfectly convinced after careful consideration that it was necessary to begin at sixty-five, that they would have to give more than 5s. a week, and there were also various other points. He was against any contributory scheme. He had sat upon an Old-Age Pensions Commission about a dozen years ago, and at that time he was distinctly opposed to Mr. Charles Booth's attitude. Since then he had been obliged to face the matter himself, and after drawing up a scheme for persons in whom he was interested he had come to see that it was not possible to carry out a contributory system. In criticising this Bill they ought to remember that they were not dealing with an established state of things. If this were an amending Bill for the purpose of altering a pension scheme already in existence, he could easily sympathise with the objections raised. But that was not the position. This was a Bill starting a very great reform under circumstances of great difficulty, because it was starting it with a limitation of means. They must consider the means in the hands of the Government. They had been told by the Government, rightly or wrongly, that they could spend £1,750,000 this year, and that they could see their way to increase the sum to £6,000,000 next year. If that was correct, it was not possible to force on the Government all the improvements which they considered desirable in the Bill, and he would not be a party to forcing upon them Amendments which would kill the measure by overburdening it and carrying it beyond the means which the Government had for carrying it out at present. What he desired to see was an old-age pension system established in this country, and they had now the means of establishing it. He grasped at that fact and was thankful to the Government for proposing this scheme. The Bill started the scheme on the right lines, and there was hardly anything in the Bill which might not in the light of experience be modified and altered. There was nothing to hinder the age at which the payment of the pension was to begin being lowered to sixty-five, or to some intermediate age between that and seventy. He did not desire a scheme on a contributory basis, but it was not impossible in a modification of the Bill to have a contributory basis if in the light of experience a change in that direction was considered desirable. They should not criticise the Bill or deal with it in Committee as if it were one amending a long-standing system. Let them remember that it was a Bill initiating a system which it was very difficult for any Government in any country to initiate. There were only two points on which he desired to express his opinion. In the first place he wished to refer again to the question whether a contributory or a non-contributory scheme was the more desirable. He began the study of this question twenty years ago, believing that there should be a contributory system. He had now come to a contrary conclusion, and his reasons were principally these. There were a large number of people in this country who, it seemed to him, ought not to have to contribute. The agricultural labourer who earned 14s. or 15s. a week and brought up a family spent his money better in providing properly for the wants of his children than in laying by for his old age. There was a great deal of poverty far and wide, which needed the assistance of a non-contributory system. The second point he wished to speak about was the question of thrift. If he thought a non-contributory system of pensions was going to injure the thriftiness of the working class or any other class, he would say that it would require great consideration before being adopted. He did not believe that it would affect thrift injuriously. On the contrary, he thought it would increase thrift. In instances where pensions were paid he had observed that the people laid by on their own behalf. The system of pensions had not injured in any way the thrift of these people. That had been his experience, extending over a dozen years. In order to make for himself a pension of 5s. a week an agricultural labourer would have to save something like £70. Could a man who was earning 15s. a week do that? If he saved £7, it was as much as he could do. If he could save enough off his pay to procure him afterwards 1s. in the week and had in the end to go into the workhouse, that 1s. would have to be paid to the workhouse for his support. There was no encouragement to thrift in that. If they gave to that man a pension of 5s., saving while he was able to work would have a great attraction for him. On these grounds, he was in favour of a non-contributory system. He was also fully convinced both from experience and theory that thrift would be advantaged by this scheme, he thanked the Government for introducing it. Though it had defects, he felt that its introduction marked the beginning of a new era. He felt that they were taking away the shadow of the workhouse from large multitudes of the working classes. If contribution towards an old-age pension scheme were wanted, let them go to the employers of labour. He, as an employer, would not be against a tax being levied upon employers for the purpose of old-age pensions. At present many employers of labour taxed themselves for that purpose. He saw in various parts of the House a gathering feeling of agreement in favour of some such scheme as that proposed by the Government. They were disposed to accept it with all its faults, as he did, knowing that it could be altered. His support would be given through thick and thin to the Government which had been bold enough to bring forward the scheme, even although he might vote for restrictions of which he did not approve.

*MR. HODGE (Lancashire, Gorton) said the hon. Member for Sunderland evidently thought that the Labour Members were irreconcilably opposed to the present measure. Strongly as they objected to it on account of its inadequate character, they intended to vote for the Second Reading. In the Committee Stage they would use every endeavour to lower the age to sixty-five, to get rid of the income limit, and of the condition that those who were presently in receipt of pauper relief should as a consequence be disqualified for a pension. In listening to the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday, it appeared to him that he was somewhat of the same opinion as the Secretary to the Admiralty, who, in a speech delivered recently in the vicinity of Leeds, had stated that the old-age pension scheme was not on a wildly generous scale. That was exactly the opinion which he and his friends entertained regarding the scheme, and it appeared to him that the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday, was more of an apology for its inadequacy than a defence of the measure. The solution of this question of old-age pensions had been, to his mind, too long delayed; and it would be rather interesting to know what the opinions of the President of the Local Government Board were upon this altogether inadequate scheme. They knew that the right hon. Gentleman was a master of phrases, and somehow he heard ringing in his ears the sound that no old-age pensions scheme would be satisfactory or adequate unless it provided a pension for the duke as well as the dustman, for the duchess as well as the washerwoman. He wondered what the right hon. Gentleman's opinions were of the present measure in the face of declarations like that? Then they who had been taking note of the various speeches delivered from the hustings previous to the last general election must be conscious of how hon. Gentlemen on the other side—both in the Government and outside the Government—were strong in their denunciations of the Conservatives for not having fulfilled their election pledges. He ventured to say that hardly any of the Members on the other side of the House had a single thought of such limitations and restrictions as were contained in the present measure, and that the great majority of the Liberal Party declared during the period which preceded the general election that any scheme of old-age pensions should be universal. He had a recollection of a deputation which waited upon the late Prime Minister, who pledged himself to a universal scheme. The present measure did not fulfil those pledges. Some people had asked where the money was to come from. His hon. friend behind him advised that they should cut their coat according to their cloth. There was plenty of cloth to be had if the Government cared to get it. He found that the land tax of 4s. in the £ was still assessed on the value of land in the year 1698. If the tax was levied on the present value of land, according to the best authorities it would bring in, roughly, £20,000,000 a year, which would be more than adequate for the payment of pensions at sixty-five years of age. One of the worst features of the measure was its inquisitorial character. The next evil was the income limit. The third was that it placed the individual who through poverty had to accept poor relief actually on a level with a criminal. At least, that was how the Labour Members looked at it. Trade unionists had unique knowledge of how much working men and their families resented prying officials seeking to get at every feature of their private life; and as a consequence this clause of the Bill was resented. Those who took an interest in slum work must realise how difficult it was to get at the truth as to the conditions under which people lived in the poorer districts. They were always afraid that something which they did not desire to become known, might become known. As a matter of fact the honest poor always desired to hide their poverty and resented anything which savoured of inquisition. The reason for that was that families were often dragged down by sickness, accident and unemployment, and did not care to lay bare to officials all the cares, struggles, and sorrows of their condition. Their very poverty, it might be, made them extra sensitive, and the consequence was that they desired that the inquisitorial character of the measure should be got rid of. He further declared that the present measure penalised those who had contributed to their trade unions as well as to their friendly societies, by way of superannuation benefits. Instead of these people being penalised, they should be encouraged. Another defect of the Bill, to his mind, was that where a man had been imprisoned without the option of a fine, no matter how or for what offence, then for a period of ten years he was debarred from claiming his pension. Supposing a man going along the highway picked up a pheasant and was brought before a Tory squire who was a Justice of the Peace, how much mercy would be shown to him? Imprisonment without the option of a fine! They knew such cases had happened, though they were not so numerous now as in times past. They knew what value a squire still put on his game, and if such a Justice of the Peace imposed for such trivial offences imprisonment without the option of a fine, this would disqualify the man for receiving a pension. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked how was a pension to be regarded by the class who was to get it. The opinion of the Labour Party was that by the differences which were being set up the pension might have a taint about it. Hence their desire that the scheme should be made universal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had referred to the Colonies and pointed out that they were in a better position than we in this country because of the fact that they had no Army and Navy to keep up and that they had large public lands. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer was uttering those words he wondered why their Imperial friends above the gangway had never thought of making these Colonies pay their fair share of the expenditure on the Imperial Army and Navy. Then as to the land grants which the Colonies received, why should not the land tax of 4s. in the £ be paid on the present value of the land and not on the value it was assessed at over 200 years ago. This would place the Chancellor on an equality with the Colonies as respects land. These suggestions were worthy of consideration by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If carried out they would get the right hon. Gentleman out of all his troubles and render not only possible, but probable, the very extension of the present scheme so earnestly desired. As a matter of fact if the right hon. Gentleman did that he would only be restoring to the people something which the landlords had stolen from the people. The hon. Member for Preston had addressed the Labour Benches, as was his usual custom, and asked what their Party would do with the drunkard and the wastrel? Their reply was that the drunkard and the wastrel were the result of the present economic conditions. What they wanted to do was to alter that system, and then they would be able to find a cure for the drunkard and the wastrel. The hon. Member for Preston said that the remedy for the present condition of things was an increase of wages. Their experience of an increase of wages was that as the wages increased the cost of living had always increased in even a greater proportion. Besides an increase of wages they wanted something to prevent monopolists gambling with the food of the people. It seemed strange that the hon. Member for Preston had so much to say about the German contributory scheme of pensions, but if he mistook not the hon. Gentleman had failed to follow the Labour Party into the lobby when they were endeavouring to give the workers of this country the right to work. If the workers were given the right to work then they might be asked to contribute to their own pensions. The hon. Gentleman had asked what the Labour Party would do with the wastrels. If the hon. Member had the experience which they had of wastrels, and as to how they were made, he would have more sympathy with them. How was the wastrel made? He was in work but became ill and had to knock off. When he began to get a little better and without much strength in him presented himself at his old workshop to get work, it was only to find that it was not a working man recovering from illness that was wanted by the employer; it was the strong man. They found that men were not wanted when they were forty-five years of age. One firm in Manchester issued a manifesto on their shop gates that labourers over thirty-five years of age were not to be taken on nor artisans over forty. And that was not all. When a man presented himself for employment his word was not taken from him as to his age; he had to bring with him a certificate from the Registrar as to the date of his birth. So that it was not sixty-five that was to be the ultimate age-limit, but forty-five. The hon. Member for Preston had something to say as to the benefits paid by the various trade unions. The unions did not fix 7s. or 10s. a week as the amount necessary to a man's keep in old age. The amount of the sum was only fixed because of its relation to the tax the man paid. In most trade unions they looked upon superannuation as an addition, when the man could no longer follow his trade, to what he could get for doing any ordinary jobbing work he might find ready to his hand. Very few trade unions had any limit so far as that was concerned. The only limit was that when a man left his trade and took to what was called a "hobbling job" for two or three days a week, then his superannuation allowance helped him to live a decent life. By a national contributory scheme the Member for Preston sought to compel thrift. If he knew, as the Labour Members know, of his struggles and his self-sacrifice to make ends meet and keep up his friendly society and sick clubs he would know that the working man practised it all the days of his life, while this scheme penalised him because of it. He was very glad to hear the hon. Member for Sunderland state that to his mind 5s. per week was altogether inadequate, and the Labour Party heartily concurred in the sentiment he expressed in that direction. The hon. Member for Preston also said that the Germans were seeking to get rid of Socialism and that we were drifting into it. It seemed to him rather surprising that with all the hon. Member's knowledge of the profits that came out of the German railways, he did not advise the Government to do with the British railways what the German Government had done with the German railways. If the Government had the free profits of our railways, they would have more than sufficient money to pay for a more liberal scheme of old-age pensions than they now placed before the House, and reduce railway freights, and so help the trade and industry of the country. He thought that those who listened to the Chancellor of the Exchequer must have had some doubts that this was not only a step towards another and better scheme of old-age pensions, but for doing something for those who were crippled, either through accident or disease, before they reached the age of seventy. The hon. Gentleman could rest assured that so far as that was concerned those on the Labour Benches would give any Government who would legislate on those lines their heartiest support. They would not vote against the Second Reading of the Bill, but they would most assuredly in Committee endeavour to get rid of what they considered were the injustices of this measure.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK said the hon. Member for Sunderland seemed to think that the only criticisms which should be made on this Bill were not those affecting the principles of the scheme which dealt imperfectly with a great evil, but only minor criticisms on details. He was afraid he must attack the Bill on the broad grounds of principle. All were united to a certain extent on this question. No one in the House could fail to sympathise with the poor of this country in their grave and terrible grievances, and no party could claim a monopoly in this sympathy. He was surprised to find that some Members were prepared, while making this beginning, to say we could not afford more money, and that, therefore, these evils must be allowed to go on only partially relieved. Was that their generosity to the poor of this country? What were the resources of this country? Were they unequal to meeting any claim so long as it was a righteous and just one? It was not on the ground of expense that he objected to this Bill. The hon. Member for Preston had moved an Amendment. He, himself, had also put one down which perhaps from parental feelings he preferred, as it dealt more fully with the objections which he took to the present Bill. But as a protest against the Bill he intended to go into the lobby with the hon. Member if he pressed his Amendment to a division. The point of injustice which the hon. Member raised by his Amendment must he thought, operate so long as our fiscal system was what it was. Under our present system this money must be drawn by direct taxation, and they were told that it would be obtained from the wealthy of this country. But they were told on good authority that riches were apt to take unto themselves wings and fly away. The flight was not always one from the possessors: riches flew away still more easily from the tax gatherer. They would drive the capital out of the country, and the money would be raised from the income-tax-payers who had moderate incomes, who perforce had to remain here, and who felt as hardly as anyone the burden and strain of life. They would have to bear the burden of this pension. His main objection, however, was not the expense, not even though the expense might cause injustice. His main objection was that the Bill struck at our national character; that it would endanger and sap the foundations of our political fibre and lead to parties bidding against each other in a sort of Dutch auction. He objected to this Bill because it asked no contribution from those who would hereafter apply for the pension. He was surprised that the Prime Minister in his Budget should have made the chief factor in his objection to a contributory scheme the surmise that it would take too long to come into operation. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer entirely deserted that argument, because he had learned from Germany that such a system could be brought into operation as quickly as was desired. Was it necessary to go to Germany to prove that? No doubt a few old people of seventy would draw their pension without giving the very moderate contribution that was suggested, but even so, it was not a bad thing to begin this new scheme generously. It should not be stinted, and the Government might be generous in regard to the money they gave to these old people, if they were to look to the contributions hereafter by the younger generation. If an insurance company insured 1,000 lives to-day it would be liable to pay a percentage to-morrow, and if they established a pension scheme of this kind they must take their chance of losing at the first. The Secretary of State for War, he noticed, came back to to the old complaint, and, in spite of the attitude assumed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that a contributory scheme would take too long to establish. But, after all, the Chancellor of the Exchequer used the best argument in favour of a contributory scheme that could be urged. The right hon. Gentleman told the House in his opening that this was a contributory scheme inasmuch as the money would be provided from the taxes which all paid. But if the scheme was to be a contributory one he, for one, would prefer to choose what he was to contribute to instead of throwing his contribution into a great pool of indiscriminate taxation out of which the money would be taken. But the right hon. Gentleman concluded with a more striking argument still, because in dealing with some of the inequitable restrictions placed in the Bill he told the House that the ground on which he would be disposed to overlook the character test, and to assume that the applicant had not been guilty of bad behaviour, was that he had contributed to a friendly society. That itself was an admission of the principle of contribution. The Government would condone misbehaviour if it could be proved that the applicant had been contributing to a friendly society. He himself objected to the Bill because it was based on the wrong principle and because the wrongness of the principle had made it inadequate to deal fairly with the matter. He was prepared to argue that the pensions established by the Bill were only Poor Law relief under another name, and he was more than surprised when the Secretary of State for War on the previous night, told them that that was his view; that the Bill was merely an extension of the Act of Elizabeth, a mere extension of the Poor Law, and that it would be probably further extended when the Poor Law Commission reported. Ever since this question of pensions had been discussed, there had been two broad lines of principle, a contributory system and a non-contributory system. These two systems were put forward under the names of Mr. Hookham and Canon Blackley thirty years ago. Both agreed that if the pension were to be an endowment pension and not contributory, it must be universal, and should be subject to no restrictions whatever. The Government had no right, if this was Poor Law, and if it was established by means of the taxes, to lay down arbitrary restrictions which did not obtain under the present Poor Law. The Government said that it was paid for out of the taxes. Who, after all, paid more taxes than the drunkard and the wastrel? He was a bigger contributor than his respectable neighbour. They were going to make a distinction between different claims, and why should they not give something to the man who had helped towards supplying the money which they had to pay. After all a contributory scheme had at least certain advantages. Under a contributory system they could appeal to an immense number of aids and reinforcements. The hon. Member for Sunderland had told them that he was fully acquainted with the pension system. He had no doubt the hon. Gentleman was, but it would not be derogatory to him if he expressed the extreme surprise which he felt when the hon. Member talked of 1s. a week as the possible contribution. The only contributions they heard of in connection with such schemes was ½d., 1d., or 2d. a week.

*MR. STUART said that he had not spoken of a contribution of 1s. a week but of the difficulty for a man with 14s. or 15s. a week saving enough off his pay to procure him a pension of 1s. a week.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK said the hon. Member at all events had stated that the amount the men would have to contribute would be £70 to get the small pension of £13 a year at seventy. Did hon. Members think that a contributory system was necessarily based upon a nice balance actuarially ascertained? They were to be generous, they were to be lavish, they were to go to the very utmost bounds that prudence would allow, in implementing and extending all that a man's savings might do for him. That was surely a better plan for attaining their object than that of merely giving a pittance under the various jealous restrictions imposed under the Bill. He had spoken of restrictions as being to his mind unjustifiable under the Poor Law. But were not some of them even unjust in themselves? If a man "through his own wilful act" brought himself into the position to obtain the pension he was to be regarded as "guilty of misbehaviour"—that was to say, if he had given up his income with a view to qualifying himself for the old-age pension. Let the House imagine a possible case. An old man, who had reached the age-limit, found that his son was in great difficulties and needed help, or his daughter was left a widow with young children. He gave up his savings to them hoping that he might trust himself to the tender mercies of a pension scheme. Yet, according to this Bill, that old man had condemned himself; he had put himself into a position, "by his own wilful act," to ask for the pension. Would any Member of the House say that such a man had acted ignobly or sinfully? Would they not rather say that he had acted nobly and generously? Why, King Lear would have been deprived of any benefit under this Bill.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): Why?

*SIR HENRY CRAIK: Because he had brought himself to a state of poverty by his own wilful act, and the Bill would deal with him rather in the spirit of Goneril and Regan than of Cordelia. Did not hon. and right hon. Gentlemen remember the enormous profits made by the shareholders of some of the great and popular insurance companies? He had no right to criticise those profits, which he fancied were reduced to the lowest limits, but millions of money were turned over in the year, and promoters of those companies were men of vast wealth at this day. Should not that work be taken up by a paternal Government? Why should they not sweep with their nets all those friendly societies, all those popular insurance societies, all those motives which would incite men to thrift, and not count too carefully what was or was not a contribution? A duty performed to the State, service in the Territorial Army, ought to create a debt due from the country to the individual. Let that be considered as a contribution. Let them take the contribution in the form of service to the State, take every form of thrift which existed, and they would have an enormously increased basis on which to go. He knew quite well it was said that contributions to old-age pensions were so unpopular with young men that they would never be able to enforce it. What was the remedy for that? Surely if they put old-age and disability pensions together they would make them part of one great scheme which the State would regulate, supplement, and guarantee. In that way they would get the benefit of a far wider range of people, and benefit a far wider range of individuals. Besides that, they would avoid what was likely to arise if the incentives to it were removed, namely, the lowering of thrift in the country. This was one of the things they had so constantly preached that they were tired of preaching it. It had been preached at every political meeting and at every gathering of friendly societies. It was only in that House at a great political moment that they glozed that over, and they were fancying that they dealt with the evil by obstinately shutting their eyes to the consequences that must follow the Bill they were now proposing. And was there not reason to fear that, once they had established this system under the Bill, there would be a race between political parties as to who should go furthest? They gave 5s; the next party would give 7s. 6d.; then they would get it up to 10s.; the age of seventy would slide down to sixty-five or sixty, and one Member below the gangway had said fifty-five was the only reasonable age. Step by step the age would fall and the pensino would increase, and step by step one party would be compelled to bid against another to gain the ear of the electors. That was a prospect which he for one could not contemplate with equanimity. He looked upon the Bill as inadequate to deal with the evil, ungenerous and niggardly, as it was, in some of its restrictions, and resting on no principle in introducing new distinctions into the Poor Law which were calculated to lower thrift throughout the nation, while sullying the waters of political controversy. For those reasons he would go into the lobby with his hon. friend the Member for Preston.

*MR. HORRIDGE (Manchester, E.) said that this Bill of the Liberal Government seemed to him to represent what he believed to be the most accurate definition that had ever been given of the Liberal Party, because he believed it to represent "trust in the people tempered by prudence." He was one of those Members of the House who felt a debt of gratitude to the Government for having enabled them to justify themselves before their constituents with respect to the pledges they had given on this subject. He represented a large manufacturing but poor constituency, and he had often said that he believed it was a greater thing for the Government of the day to introduce a system which would bring happiness and comfort into the homes of the aged poor than to win great victories or even to exterminate nations in South Africa. But whilst he sympathised with the objects of this Bill entirely, he wanted to draw the attention of the Government to one portion of it. He himself had the strongest objection to what he called the "living-together-in-one-house" clause. It seemed to him extremely undesirable that in a case where they had two old people, father and mother, they should hold out the inducement to son or daughter, the one to take the father and the other the mother, because if they lived together their pension would be 7s. 6d. instead of 10s. The part to which he called special attention was the second subsection of Clause 4—

> "In calculating the means of a person being one of two or more persons living together in the same house, the means shall not be taken to be a less amount than the total means of those persons divided by the number of those persons."

As he understood that subsection, after giving it the best consideration he could, it meant not persons who were in receipt of pensions living in the same house, but if a person asked for a pension he would be precluded from getting it if the total income of the persons living in the same house divided by the number of such persons gave a sum equal to £26 10s. Say an old servant, who had attained the age for pension, was allowed to live in the same house as his or her master. Directly the master had more than 20s. a week that servant lost his or her pension. That might not be the intention of it, but it struck him as the meaning of the clause. Let him take the simple case of two persons living together, one had 20s. a week, and the other was entitled to a pension. Because the first person had 20s. a week they divided that by two, and the person entitled to a pension was one of two persons living in a house with an aggregate income which, when divided, was more than 10s. each, and was disqualified. If that was not the meaning of the clause it was extremely undesirably expressed. The mover of the Amendment said he thought the Bill a violation of the principles of free trade. That seemed to him to depend entirely upon what point of view they regarded the measure from. If they regarded it as a gift from the pockets of one class of persons for the benefit of another, he agreed it was not doing justice between man and man. But if they regarded it as a debt by the State to those who had worked for seventy years, then it was an act of justice, and it was not a transference from one pocket to another, and it was consistent with the principles of free trade. The seconder of the Amendment said very much what the hon. Member for Glasgow University had said, that this was a matter which would lead to what one would call a Dutch auction. If it was the right thing to do let them not be afraid of getting popularity by doing it. If ever there was a measure which entitled a Government to popularity it was this. It had been long enough coming, therefore they appreciated it all the more when it did come. He did not know whether it occurred to Members who had spoken about the great provident societies of the country to think whether it would be to the advantage of those societies that the Government should start a competing system by which people were made compulsorily to put their money into an insurance fund. Those societies would be the first to object to a contributory scheme. The hon. Member for Glasgow University had misquoted the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the effect that it was no matter how wrongly a person had acted, it was to be all wiped out if he subscribed to a friendly society. What he understood the right hon. Gentleman to say was that if a person had subscribed to such a society, then he should be considered fit and there should be no inquiry—an entirely different proposition. Personally, he agreed with the hon. Member for Sunderland. He was not over anxious to lead people to save money for the purpose of hoarding it. He held that the best interests of the State were served by every halfpenny of their poor wages being spent in making their homes as comfortable and their children as happy and healthy as they possibly could, and that it was bad policy on behalf of the State to suggest that the working classes should put money by in order to have savings at the end of their life. He was pretty certain they could never save out of the wages they got anything like an appreciable provision for old age, but if they could save a very little, the 5s. a week and the little saving, if it was only a shilling or two a week, made something reasonably substantial, and he held that that was a great inducement to the best and most valuable form of thrift, and that was one of the reasons this was such an exceedingly good Bill. He did not understand that the Government put it forward as perfect, or said they were against an age-limit of sixty-five. But they had only a certain fund at their disposal and they had put it into the scheme, which he was glad to see from every quarter of the House had more supporters than opponents, and under these circumstances he thought they had taken the grandest step in social legislation that had ever been taken by any Government.

*EARL PERCY (Kensington, S.) said the hon. Member had told the House that they ought not to be afraid to do a thing because they believed it would be popular. He was going to do a thing which was very possibly unpopular—to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston; but at the same time he would not do so for precisely the same reasons that he had given. He was not against a scheme of old-age pensions, and he was not prepared to commit himself to the doctrine that the only sound principle on which they could give a system of old-age pensions was a contributory scheme. Member after Member had, however, argued that such a scheme could not come into operation at once, and that it would exclude a large number of the most deserving cases. Both these arguments were completely knocked on the head by the speech of the hon. Member for Preston, which showed that under the German system, whether it was a good or a bad one, pensions could be given at once, and that even under the Government scheme a great number of deserving people would be excluded. His doubts as to the merits of a contributory scheme were of a totally different kind. He realised that there was great weight in the view that it was difficult to include women in a contributory scheme, and it was very difficult to have a contributory scheme without seeming to lay down the principle that one particular form of thrift was more desirable than another, that form of thrift being a pecuniary investment in some society or other. He was not at all sure that that was a very satisfactory principle, and he would be sorry to commit himself to the doctrine that a contributory scheme was the only system of old-age pensions which was permissible. But, at all events, a contributory scheme had this great and overwhelming advantage in present circumstances. It committed the State to no financial liability which could not be foreseen That was not the case with the Government scheme. They sat in that House primarily as trustees of the taxpayers; and for them deliberately to vote for a scheme which was going to cost £7,500,000, towards which only £1,500,000 would be provided in the present year, seemed to him to be nothing but a breach of trust. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made only one defence of his proposal, and that was that it was not the custom to ask Chancellors of the Exchequer to anticipate the proposals they would have to make in the following year. If the Opposition when in power had in a similar way sought to saddle the country with a naval programme they would have been told that they had no right to mortgage the finances of the country without telling the House fully and clearly how they proposed to deal with their liabilities. In Australia they did not propose to start their Commonwealth pension scheme at all without a definite earmarking of Customs duties as the source from which they were to be supplied. But there was another reason why it was the duty of the Government to take the House more into their confidence than they had. The Chancellor of the Exchequer playfully said the other day that there was no reason to expose the victims of the next year's taxation to another twelve months torture. That could only mean that it was proposed to meet this additional cost out of increased taxation. The Prime Minister made a statement to a deputation last winter to the effect that the cost of old-age pensions must be borne proportionately by every class of the community.

MR. ASQUITH: I never said so.

*EARL PERCY: Will the right hon. Gentleman correct me as to what he did say?

MR. ASQUITH said he could not correct a statement he had never made. Perhaps the noble Lord had in his mind a statement, not to a deputation, but in a speech he thought in Lancashire, in which he said that under any system of old-age pensions the working classes ought to contribute, and the whole cost ought not to be thrown on the other classes of the community.

*EARL PERCY said that that was the speech to which he referred. He did not see that the statement the right hon. Gentleman now made was essentially different from his own. At all events the right hon. Gentleman said that an old-age pension scheme must be one to which the working classes would contribute. Now this scheme required large additional taxation. Was that additional taxation to be met out of direct or indirect taxation? If it was to be met out of indirect taxation the proposal practically was that they should remit indirect taxation which was not onerous at present in order to reimpose it next year, possibly in a more onerous form. Or was, the whole cost to be placed on the shoulders of the income-tax payer, as the hon. Members below the gangway desired? Talk of the courage of the Government! They asked this House calmly to vote £7,500,000 for old-age pensions without the shadow of an idea as to what ultimate burden might be thereby imposed, a charge which, whatever its direct incidence might be, must ultimately fall on the great mass of the working classes and possibly expose them to burdens that would outweigh any relief given by the Bill. That seemed to him a proposal that was altogether to be condemned. Even if it could be proved that the expenditure could be met out of taxation without imposing a great burden on the working classes, still he would have to ask, would it prejudice other and more urgent forms of expenditure? There must be next year an enormous expenditure in connection with the naval programme. His own belief was that the way in which such naval expenditure ought to be met was by loan. The circumstances under which this rivalry of national armaments was being forced upon us was so peculiar as to justify recourse to the same financial expedients which were justifiable in the case of active warlike operations. There was nothing more likely to act as a deterrent on the continuance of this kind of competition than the knowledge that the financial provision for the defence of this country was upon a settled basis and that Governments would not be tempted to neglect it for fear of adding to the burdens of the taxpayer. The Government did not seem to have the same objection to a raid upon the Sinking Fund, but that would not provide a large sum towards the total cost they would have to meet. In view of the hints made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech yesterday as to possible further economy in the direction of Naval expenditure he was not going to vote for spending £7,500,000 on old-age pensions until he saw much more clearly and definitely what was the total amount which the Government was going to provide for Naval expenditure next year. Those considerations were to his mind infinitely stronger when dealing with a scheme the cost of which was admittedly so uncertain that no accurate forecast was possible. Already the estimated total cost had risen from £6,000,000 to £7,500,000. He did not know why the Prime Minister shook his head.

MR. ASQUITH: For this reason, that the two estimates referred to were for two entirely different things. I have said over and over again that the £6,000,000 was my estimate of the cost during the next financial year, and £7,500,000 is the Chancellor of the Exchequer's estimate of the ultimate cost of the scheme on the lines upon which we are proceeding. [OPPOSITION cries of "No, no."]

*EARL PERCY asked if the right hon. Gentleman meant the ultimate cost next year.

MR. ASQUITH: No.

*EARL PERCY said that at any rate the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer yesterday did not tally with the statement just made by the right hon. Gentleman. When speaking in favour of the changes he proposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer said we must be prepared for an immediate increase to £7,500,000.

MR. ASQUITH: My right hon. friend said the exact contrary.

*EARL PERCY said that at any rate the Leader of the Opposition's recollection tallied with his own, which was that the cost would be £6,000,000 the first year, £7,500,000 the next year, and £11,000,000 the year after. He thought the cost of the scheme would be infinitely greater than the estimate, because they had overrated the amount of deduction which would have to be made for criminals and paupers and the Government had certainly under-estimated the cost of administration. With reference to the latter point the Government had taken the cost of administration in New Zealand, which he did not think was any analogy whatever, because in New Zealand it was easy to trace the history of the applicants, and that was not so in this country, where they had to deal with frequent removals. The right hon. Gentleman also counted upon a certain number of people not claiming pensions, but that seemed very unlikely seeing the number of societies interested in their putting forward claims. The right hon. Gentleman had not allowed for the withdrawal of pensions by employers who now paid them. That brought him to his final criticism, and it was a point which had not been raised in the debate up to the present time. He alluded to the effect of this scheme upon the existing system of Poor Law administration. The Government presented this scheme to the House as a system of pensions which were to be wholly distinguished from ordinary Poor Law relief. His right hon. friend the Member for Morpeth earlier in this debate quoted Mr. Charles Booth with approval as if the Government's scheme bore any relation to any scheme of Mr. Booth's. Two schemes more utterly unlike could hardly be imagined. He observed in a pamphlet that Mr. Booth pointed out explicitly that if they wanted to separate old-age pensions from the stigma of the Poor Law there were only two ways of doing it, one was by a contributory scheme and the other by a universal scheme. Mr. Booth said that if they gave anybody something to which everybody had a right, then they would remove the stigma which depended on selection. That was why free education carried no stigma with it. But the moment they confined this boon to a limited class then the stigma remained. He declined to consider this as a pension scheme at all. The Government were really proposing another form of outdoor relief. He wished to know what effect this new system of outdoor relief was going to have upon the existing system. There was scarcely a single expert upon Poor Law matters who did not agree that one of the greatest blots on Poor Law administration was the wholly inadequate sums given in outdoor relief, and everybody admitted that that was one of the first reforms which it was necessary to carry out. He thought the Poor Law Commission would be sure to recommend a general increase in the amount of outdoor relief, and how were they going to deal with that question? The moment they increased outdoor relief everybody over seventy in receipt of an old-age pension with no independent means might be in a worse position than the person over seventy receiving the increased scale of outdoor relief. The grievance of the inadequacy of outdoor relief would have to be remedied not only in the case of persons over seventy years of age, but also in the case of those under seventy years of age. It seemed to him that one of two things must happen. Either the condition of the pauper under seventy who was in receipt of outdoor relief would be far better and more tempting than that of the old-age pensioner, or else they would have to do away with the age limit under this Bill. Therefore, before they went any further with this scheme, even supposing they were prepared to vote for it, having regard to the position of the finances of this country, they ought in common sense when they were being asked to lay the foundation of a system of Poor Law reform, to ask the Government how they proposed to fit this scheme in with any reform of the Poor Law. His own view was quite definite as to his duty at the present juncture. There was no plea of urgency for old-age pensions. [Cries of "Oh, oh."] He repeated that there was no plea of urgency in the sense that the Government did not give any pledge in favour of old-age pensions, and in fact they had taken credit that they had proposed this scheme although they were not pledged to it. There was no urgency in this sense, that there was no reason why the old-age pensions scheme should be begun this year instead of waiting six months for the Report of the Poor Law Commission. Having regard to the financial position of the country and the desirability when undertaking Poor Law reform, of dealing with it in a scientific spirit; in view of the necessity of seeing exactly how far they could organise, by way of supplementing the amount taken from the taxpayers, the resources of charity already available, personally, he should certainly follow the hon. Member for Preston into the division lobby in support of his Amendment.

*MR. HAWORTH (Manchester, S.) said that every hon. Member who had spoken desired to see some form of old-age pensions established, but they all had some considerable criticism to offer in regard to the Government Bill. As they had been reminded several times, all parties were more or less pledged to introduce some measure of old-age pensions. The hon. Member for Preston seemed to think that perhaps he was the only hon. Member who had taken the trouble to refer to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. In that speech they had a revival of the controversy as to whether a proposal for old-age pensions was a promise or not. Hon. Members below the gangway appeared to have stolen their thunder and they had promised rather loudly what they intended to do. Meanwhile the Liberal Party seemed to have been wisely and sympathetically watching all that was going on and taking careful note of the possible ways in which an old-age pension scheme might be introduced. Of course, they had to consider the two great principles of a contributory or a non-contributory scheme. After having decided that point there were many other details as to the age limit, the amount of income of the recipient, the amount of the pension, and the question of character. There seemed to be on this subject two schools of thought, one represented by the Charity Organisation Society, which was admirable in many ways, and the other that which was sometimes called the sentimental side, which laid down that the poor old people must have something done for them, and they seemed to take very little account of whether it was altogether a wise thing or easy of accomplishment. On the other hand, the Charity Organisation Society seemed to be a little bit too severe. The Prime Minister in his Budget Speech referred to various efforts which had been made. It had been reiterated again and again that this Bill would be only a start, but it must be started on lines which were socially and financially sound. Different plans had been proposed. One was very simple on paper, namely, a universal non-contributory scheme. No one knew exactly what that would cost, but he supposed it would be something like £27,000,000 or £28,000,000. Very few people thought it would be wise, even if it were possible, to find the money for that plan. It would mean the giving of pensions where they were not needed, and certainly where they were not deserved. Most people ruled that plan out both on the social and on the financial side. Then they had plans for a limited scheme. A scheme limited in its scope must be subject to tests in regard to character, income, or the bringing in of some measure of contribution. They all had their defects and objections. Reference had been made to what had been done in Germany, but he did not wish to dilate on that to any great extent. He might say in passing that one important element in the German scheme which made it possible to be the success which, in many respects, it undoubtedly was, was that it was to a large extent compulsory on those classes who participated in it. Under what was called Dr. Hunter's scheme a man would pay £5 into the bank at the age of twenty-five, and £1 a year until he was sixty-five. Then the Government would add £15, which, with the accruing interest, would be the means of providing a pension for him. They all saw the obvious defects of a scheme like that. The man might break down in his payments during forty years, or he might not pay in his £5 at twenty-five. Another scheme which was proposed for a time was that if a man could show that he had a half-crown coming in from a friendly society, he was at sixty-five or seventy, whatever the age might be, to have a corresponding amount added by the Government. That implied that there was only one kind of thrift to be recognised by the State. There were many kinds of thrift. For instance, a man who had put his savings in a building society would be living in his own house. In that way he was really saving rent. That man had been most provident and useful to the community, but that scheme would cut him out of benefit as a thrifty being. There was another kind of thrift, and he was not sure but that it was the worthiest kind. It happened in the case of a man who had a large family, and who, instead of thinking of his own comfort in his old age, strove to give his boys and girls something better than an ordinary elementary education. He helped them to go on to one of the universities, and by exercising self-denial in the bringing up of his family, and making no provision for his old age, he was doing a service by sending out a family of sons and daughters excellently educated and suited to serve the community, and for that service he ought to be recouped by the community. That man would be ruled out altogether. Many supporters of the contributory principle advocated the purchase of annuities from the Government through the Post Office, or through some friendly society. That had been practised for some time under voluntary arrangements, but he thought experience went to show that these annuities were not popular. Another objection taken to the starting of a contributory scheme was that, if they only began to contribute now, it would not come into operation quickly, unless they were going to something unsound with respect to those who were nearing the pension age. As to the Bill, he wished to point out the unfairness which would arise in some cases, and the discouragement it would be to thrift. Surely they all wanted to encourage thrift. A man with an income of 11s. a week, and who, therefore, would not be entitled to a pension, would be worse off than a man who had an income of 7s. and would receive a pension of 5s. He gave as an example the case of a widow who, without any necessity to work herself during the lifetime of her husband, was left a sum of £600 or £700 in trust. The income from this sum would entitle her to a pension of £13 a year. But the woman who for thirty or forty years had striven to maintain herself, earning perhaps no more than 10s. a week during all those years, and who broke down before she reached seventy and was bound to go into the workhouse, would be debarred under the Bill from receiving a pension. Therefore the Bill discouraged thrift. He hoped the Government would see their way to eliminate as a disqualification such income as was derived from a friendly society in taking into account the income a man or a woman might have. He believed that Charles Booth some years ago said that there was only one scheme possible. In his opinion they must either have a universal non-contributory scheme or no scheme at all. He had criticised the Bill very briefly. He did not wish to lay himself open to the charge that he had nothing but criticism. Many defects had been pointed out, but there had been very little whole-hearted blessing. He would venture to suggest a scheme which had been before the country before, and which he believed was a feasible scheme. It was considered by a Select Committee in 1884–5–6 and was extremely simple. The proposal was that by a payment of £10 at the age of twenty-one provision could be made for 8s. a week for loss of wages during sickness and for an old-age pension of 4s. a week at seventy. In order to carry out the scheme it must be compulsory and universal. It might be urged that the scheme would come into operation at a distant time; but he was thankful to say that the Bill of the Government made it unnecessary to consider that objection now for they looked upon the present proposal as a stop-gap scheme until some other could be brought into operation. They need not consider in this scheme questions of character or of thrift, because it was a contributory scheme, a scheme of insurance; and they would have no more right to go to a man who said he was sick and had lost his wages, or to a woman who said she wanted her 8s. a week and there was the doctor's certificate, and say to them: "You don't deserve it"—to the man: "You are a blackguard," and to the woman: "You are no good," and therefore refuse payment of the allowance, than an insurance company would have the right to refuse payment of an insurance policy to the executors of the person insured on the ground that he was a blackguard or a nuisance to society. In this case the money was the man's or the woman's own. That was a sound principle. They had eliminated all objections to unfair and inquisitorial inquiries which were necessary when they fixed an income limit. A contributory scheme going on through life, such as those of the friendly societies, was open to the grave objection that members dropped out. It was quite impossible for many persons to continue saving through life, especially those who had only incomes of 14s. up to 30s. a week. No one according to his scheme was asked to pay a penny after reaching the age of twenty-one, in the years previous to which he would generally have no special call upon him. He maintained that a man had no right to have a wife before he was twenty-one; at any rate, if he had, there would be no big family to support. As the contribution ceased at the age of twenty-one, the man could go on if he desired to contribute to his friendly society or trade union or other institutions for saving.

SIR GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.): Would the hon. Member say where the £10 is to come from in the case of an agricultural labourer?

*MR. HAWORTH said he was very glad of the interruption; that question was dealt with very thoroughly by the Select Committee. One advantage of the scheme was that it included insurance against sickness and loss of wages, and he contended that that would do a great deal to diminish the pauperism of the country, and to reduce the poor rates. Hon. Members had spoken of the hardship of people in towns getting on the rocks through sickness. There was nothing more pathetic than to see an honest man through sickness losing his savings little by little, until he was utterly stranded. Those who knew something of slum life must have noticed homes from which piece after piece of furniture went to the pawn shop, and the children were kept away from Sunday school because their good clothes had been pledged. The end was that such people became absolute paupers. Under this scheme if a man lost his wages through sickness or accident he would still have 8s. coming in every week, and whatever else that would do, it would preserve him from becoming a pauper. By thus reducing the poor rates, it was argued by some that they would relieve the rich and make the poor save for themselves. He was quite aware that there were many wealthy ratepayers, but there were vast numbers of poor deserving people with small incomes on whom the weight of the rates bore heavily. They had to consider the incidence of the hardship of the rates, and to think of those to whom it was a great trial to pay poor rates. In addition to that, they knew of instances where high rates had driven factories and public works from one town to another where the manufacturers got the benefit of lower rates; and it would not be difficult to prove that a reduction of rates meant a lessening of the cost of production which tended to raise wages in that particular centre. Another advantage of the scheme was that it would inculcate habits of providence. A man who had been made to pay 1s. 3d. a week until he was twenty-one, so as to make up the £10, would be likely to go on saving when he had the means to begin to do so. Another objection to this compulsory insurance scheme was that it was alleged that they could not make a man thrifty by Act of Parliament. Thrift was a virtue; providence was a duty. They could not make a man virtuous by Act of Parliament, but they could make a man do his duty by Act of Parliament. They could not make a man honest by Act of Parliament, but they could say: "Thou shalt not steal." They could not say to a man: "You shall have the virtue of thrift," but they could say to him: "You must not make yourself needlessly a burden on the community." The law already protected rich minors against their own folly, and the law here would step in and protect the poor against their own carelessness—he did not say their criminal folly—during the few years of early life, in wasting money that might be easily saved. It might be said that the unemployed could not pay the 1s. 3d. per week, but the contribution was made in the years between eighteen and twenty-one, when there were the fewest unemployed. And even if they did not pay they would not be worse off than at present. He contended that the scheme would, to use a bull, make for the irregularity of unemployment. When the man was in employment so much would be deducted from his wages and put to his credit on his card. And if a man could produce his card marked "paid up" when seeking employment that would be an advantage to him in obtaining work. Again, apprentices while they were receiving little or no wages would have a little more time given them to pay up. As to women, there were very few working women who in these days could not put by 1s. 3d. per week in order to make up the £10. If they went round a factory town they would see young women going about on week days with shawls round their heads, but on Sunday those girls would appear decked out with fine-looking clothes, and no one would then say that they could not pay 1s. 3d. per week until they were twenty-one. His hon. friend the Member for Norfolk had asked how an agricultural labourer could get the £10. His answer to that was that the agricultural labourer at the age from eighteen to twenty-one was, for wage-earning purposes, a man, and more able to pay his contribution than when he was thirty or forty years of age, when on the same small wage he had to keep a wife and family. Moreover, the ingenuity of insurance societies, who were only too pressing in doing business in these days, would quickly come in and devise easy terms for insuring the £10 being paid up at the age of twenty-one. with regard to claims through sickness, of course, only those who could produce a certificate that they were unable to work for a certain period through sickness could claim. There were many persons who, not being wage-earners, could not claim, and there were also many who, though entitled, would not claim old-age pensions. Then there would be the contributions by the non-beneficiaries, contributions of £10 which every wealthy person had to contribute. Then there was the question of the married woman. How would that be dealt with ? If this measure was to become law, and to work properly, it might be possible in that case to decide who was the wage-earner, and having decided that to say that the wage-earner should receive 12s. a week. Everyone familiar with the industrial centres knew that the great evil was that women went to work after they were married, and such a scheme would create the inestimable boon that a woman would be prevented from working almost up to the day of her confinement, and would be prevented from coming back too soon afterwards, a thing which injured the women, injured the children, and affected the race for generations to come. If sick pay were granted it would be possible to prevent a woman in that condition working for a time. Under such a scheme as this, they could say to a woman: "You shall not work for so many weeks before, and so many weeks after the birth of your child, but shall take so much sick pay," and in that way effect a great reform. This scheme had been before the country before. A Committee had investigated it, and its Report was extremely interesting. The hon. Members for Hallam, West Leeds, Rhondda Valley, one of the Divisions of Glasgow, and North Louth were members of that Committee. The Committee said they were disposed to wait for the further development of public opinion, which they believed was bound to come on the recommendations they made, before advising the adoption of a general system of superannuation. That was not a very hearty condemnation of the scheme. The Committee sat through three Parliaments. They pointed out that the working class witnesses were strongly in favour of this scheme, and that Sir Edward Waller, who formed the Corps of Commissionaires, had founded a compulsory scheme of insurance worked on these lines. But then came the friendly societies. He did not want to do anything that would damage friendly societies, but it must be remembered that the societies existed for the people, and not the people for the societies, and therefore the House was not bound to consider the interest of the societies as against the interests of the nation. But the experience of their officials would probably be utilised to a large extent in a great national undertaking. The evidence of the friendly societies was that giving the whole nation, through compulsory insurance, an independent position against pauperism in old age, would limit the membership of their societies. They did not condemn the scheme, but said it would limit their membership. The Committee said that no conclusive evidence had been given to show that the establishment of compulsory assurance on a national basis could damage the funds or affect the existence of any society conducted on sound principles. They went on to say that such a system would, while aiding the thrift of the thrifty, in no way discourage or put an end to the waste of the improvident. Of 649 boards of guardians who were asked their opinion, eighty-six reported in favour of such a system and none against. The scheme was advocated by the National League, which held over 400 meetings throughout the country, at only one of which was there an adverse vote, and on that occasion extraneous matter was introduced into the discussion. The Committee referred to the evidence of a certain Dr. Ascherott, a Judge of the Court of Berlin, who gave evidence as to what they were doing in Germany. That gentleman said there were strict safeguards against malingering. But after he got home and inquired into this, he wrote and said the operation of compulsory societies, which had been referred to in this debate, instead of damaging the voluntary societies, had done much to increase them; that they had increased since the introduction of a compulsory scheme. The Committee recommended that before the scheme was embarked upon, there should be education in the principle; that there should be compulsory education in thrift in the curriculum of our elementary schools. The objection to compulsion, so far as deferred annuities were concerned, was less than that for sick pay. He maintained that the Report of the Committee, which did not recommend the scheme, at any rate far from condemned it in any wholesale fashion. It could be worked through the Post Office, which would have an immense advantage over friendly societies and trade unions, inasmuch as it would have branches in every village of the country, which these societies had not. He did not want for a moment to substitute this for the Government scheme, but he did say that the Government, having introduced their scheme, made this scheme possible, and, in fact, necessary. He wished also to express his thanks to Mrs. Blackley, the widow of the late Canon Blackley, for the assistance she had given him in this matter. He did not appeal to the Government to do anything heroic, to take their courage in both hands, or anything of that kind. He asked them to look at this scheme quietly and see if the objection which held good with the Committee twenty years ago had not been eliminated by the scheme now before the House, and see if they could not graft this scheme on to their own. If they did, he ventured to say that history would record of them that they came to this problem, they saw the difficulties of it, and they conquered them all, and by so doing they achieved a great measure of social reform, on lines socially and financially sound, for the lasting good of the toiling millions of their country.

SIR BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, W.) regretted that on this occasion he appeared in an unusual character. He had always been an economist in this House, and this was the first occasion that he pressed the Government for additional expenditure. He did not, however, ask for the age-limit to be lowered. He knew the Government were doing as much as they could, and that the age-limit could not be altered except in years to come. A man who had reached the age of sixty-five, after having worked hard all his life, was entitled to a pension. He was not going to object to the clause about two persons living together in a house, because he thought it was in accordance with what many of them desired; but it appeared to him that the pauper disqualification in the third clause might do harm. They who were concerned in elections knew well how unfairly this disqualification acted in reference to the Parliamentary register. They had themselves seen a man disqualified for voting because two years before, perhaps having broken his leg, he was laid up for weeks in bed and had been compelled to accept relief. Another man perhaps appeared on the register as soon as it was made up after having been perpetually receiving relief for eighteen months. It would be the same with the disqualification under this Bill, because a man who had lived a long time on the rates would manage, during the year provided under the Bill, with the assistance of others, to keep from getting relief, and so would be entitled to pension, while another man, who had not lived on the rates, by illness or accident might be compelled to accept relief within the year, and so would be debarred from pension. The pauper disqualification would cause great hardship, and they would find men either starving themselves, or getting friends to help them in keeping off the rates, in order that they might be qualified to receive the pension. He could not bear the idea of men starving themselves or suffering greatly in order to hold on until the 1st January next. Nor did he think that the case was any better if a man went round cadging from his neighbours to keep him off relief. Any little addition to the taxes which might be involved by the abolition of the disqualification would be balanced by a relief to the pockets of the ratepayers, while it would tend to diminish what he considered was a false feeling of shame in receiving relief. A man paid his rates all his life; it was a kind of insurance; and if, when he became old, he was obliged to take the fruits of that insurance it was no disgrace at all. He was really only getting back money which he had paid in his younger days. He thought that the disqualification would apply very little to indoor relief, and the pension would hardly be able to keep any man out of the workhouse. He could only speak for his own part of the world, and his experience was that able-bodied men had almost wholly disappeared from the workhouse. Not only that, but he was glad to be able to say that the children were being more and more boarded-out, and the workhouses were becoming infirmaries. People who were not accustomed to rural life seemed to imagine that they had nothing to do but give pensions to sweep away the workhouses altogether. But that was not so at all; and he was glad to see that Lord Methuen before he went to his present command made a very excellent speech in which he pointed out that infirmaries would always be necessary. They could not do away with workhouses. He noticed in the newspaper the other day the report of an inquest on the body of a naval officer who had had a pension of £12 10s. a month. None could say but that was a handsome pension, yet the officer had actually died of neglect, because his pension was not sufficient to provide the nurses he required. There were many men so infirm as to require the services of trained nurses day and night, who ought to have a doctor always at hand, and who ought to have good, appropriate and well-cooked food together with the benefit of all those modern methods by which were alleviated the sufferings of men who were infirm, or paralysed, or diseased. It was often a very great strain on relatives to keep their old parents or relations in their houses. He had known cases in which the man and his wife were anxious to keep the old parent in the house; it was not a question of money; but the man, probably an agricultural labourer, was at work all day, while his wife had to attend to the children, do the work of the house and the cooking and washing. To them to be called up six or eight times in the course of the night after a hard day's work meant very great and real suffering. He had seen a man and his wife try over and over again to keep their parent at home, in their anxiety that he should not go to the workhouse, but at last they had been obliged to send him there. That was the reason why they always kept up the infirmaries, and he only hoped that this Bill would have the effect of improving them. They were being improved every day, and, if possible, people who were infirm should be made to go to them, for they would there have the benefit of all modern appliances to alleviate their sufferings, and, above all things, their relatives should have free access to them. He had yesterday listened to the speech of the Member for Preston with very great interest, and anyone who heard him would agree that it was a very fine speech. He quite agreed with a good deal of what the hon. Member said. He was not at all sure that he did not agree with him that, if they remitted taxation to the amount of the pensions, the people would be better off than under this Bill. The Bill gave a pension of 5s., which was sufficient in rural districts where living was cheap, but it was not sufficient in the Metropolis. He could only hope that a great many would not spend their old age in London, but would spend it in the country where living was cheap. It was, of course, too late to consider a proposal of that kind, because pledges had been given from every part of the House. He had himself given no pledge on the subject. He only knew that he said in his address in 1900 that the enormous expense of the War would render old-age pensions impossible in his lifetime. He hoped that it might not be so, though of course he might die before the pensions came into operation. He thought that the Bill was drawn up on sound lines, though it was not a contributory Bill. A contributory Bill seemed to him to go against political economy. Of course the early and primitive idea of taxation was to get out of everybody's pocket what he ought to pay. He supposed that the prehistoric tax was a poll tax. Then came the political scientists like the hon. Member for Preston, and they gradually found out that it was much easier and much better for the State and better for the taxpayer to collect the taxes in bulk, and therefore indirect taxes, and to a great extent direct taxes, were collected in bulk as being much the easier method. Certainly he would rather keep on such duties than see collectors go round from house to house and cottage to cottage to get the contributions. He was very glad indeed to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he was ready to consider the sliding scale. He thought that would be a great improvement to the Bill. He hoped and was sure that they would understand in Committee that these pensions were not to be given as a reward for good conduct. The worst man could not be allowed to starve, and when they got this scheme perfected they hoped to get rid of everything except the infirmaries. With regard to thrift he hoped that the Bill would prove an aid to it and not a discouragement. In his own parish where the wages were low there was hardly a lad of over fourteen years of age who would not become entitled to a pension of 5s. a week after sixty-five. He had often thought that they must sometimes feel the fact that a man in the next parish got his half-crown or 3s. 6d, while they were only to get 5s. after having paid money for it all their lives. Of course now they felt that they would get the full 5s., while they would have the benefit of their own pension. He did ask for this one boon, that those who were now in receipt of Poor Law relief might not be disqualified. He recognised the financial difficulty, but he would put off the pensions for a year or two, and increase the age from seventy to seventy-one rather than see what he considered to be an injustice done. Much as he regretted that he should be raising this objection and advocating further expenditure, yet he thought that the disqualification to which he referred ought to be removed.

*MR. T. R. BETHELL (Essex, Maldon) said that, having regard to the assurance given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech yesterday and by the Prime Minister in his Budget speech that this scheme of old-age pensions was intended as only the beginning, and the restrictions were not to be regarded as of a permanent character, he had no intention of raising a discordant note in this debate. On the contrary, he rejoiced heartily that the Government had made a beginning with this important question and that they had laid a solid foundation for a practical and workable scheme. He ventured to say that of the different schemes which had been placed before the House the Government had chosen the only possible one having regard to the financial exigencies of the present time. He certainly thought that the fact that the Government had been able to bring in this scheme at all spoke volumes for our free trade system. Various Members had spoken of the measure as likely to discourage thrift. On the contrary, he thought it was likely to act as an incentive to thrift. In Germany, Denmark, and New Zealand, none of the disasters which certain Members had apprehended had happened, but on the contrary the schemes were working remarkably well, and no one there would be disposed to go back to the previous state of things. The principle and practice of thrift was undoubtedly a very excellent quality, but how was the agricultural labourer with his 14s. or 15s. a week to make provision for his declining years? In Ireland they were informed the rate of wages was something like 9s. or 11s. a week, and, therefore, they saw how difficult it was for anything like a reasonable provision to be made by those agricultural labourers, especially as they had in many cases a numerous family to bring up. The hon. Member for E st Leeds had stated that some 65 per cent. of the pensionables would belong to the agricultural labourer class. If that was a correct estimate he would certainly feel very great satisfaction that the agricultural labourer would come in for his share of consideration. There was no class of the community that deserved more generous consideration at the hands of the State. Faithful, patient, and enduring, they had done the hard work of the rural districts for many years with very insufficient remuneration, and he certainly thought the Bill would be a very great boon to that class. It would no doubt lead to a reunion of many families, and tend to make family life more happy than it was to-day. Further than that, the effect of the Bill would be to stop the rural exodus that had been going on for some years. With regard to the disqualification clauses, he was exceedingly sorry they had not before them some portion of the Poor Law Commission's Report. If they had had it the Government might have been able to remove some of the disqualifications that attached to pauperism under Clause

3 of the Bill. The practice of boards of guardians was not to grant outdoor relief except in the most deserving cases. There were cases where relief was applied for, and where the applicants were not willing to go into the workhouse. Under this Bill these less worthy applicants for relief would come in for a pension, while the more deserving portion of the community, who had been granted outdoor relief, would be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. He was exceedingly sorry those in receipt of outdoor relief had not been to some extent, at all events, brought within the provisions of the scheme. In reply to a question the other day the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the cost of bringing into the Bill those in receipt of outdoor relief to-day would mean an expenditure of some £2,200,000, and that if the contributions from boards of guardians were made equal to the amount that was to-day paid for outdoor relief, it would place a charge on the Exchequer of approximately £780,000. At such an expenditure as that, the Government might fairly have considered the advisability of bringing in this very deserving class. He did not know whether that would be an outside estimate, but at any rate they knew that in rural districts a very large proportion of those over seventy were in receipt of outdoor relief. In the division which he represented they had perhaps in some respects a unique scheme. They had an old-age relief fund which was entirely supported by voluntary contributions, and had been working some seven or eight years. Under that scheme they supplemented the slender allowances which were made to these needy folk who got something in the shape of relief from the different unions, and in that way they were able to assist some 250 of these poor people. Of that 250 no less than 184 were to-day in receipt of outdoor relief. He thought that would be some evidence of the large number of those receiving outdoor relief in the rural districts. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer was unwilling to consider the case of those in receipt of outdoor relief, perhaps he might be inclined to consider how far it would be advisable to bring within the provisions of this Bill those who to-day were receiving outdoor relief, but who did not apply for it before they attained the age of seventy. There might be considerable equity in adopting that course, and he would be extremely grateful for even such a small measure as that. He was exceedingly glad to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer intimate that he was willing to consider a modification with regard to the disqualification attaching to the character clause. As the clause stood, the fact of a man being debarred from the pension by some wilful act of misbehaviour was certainly in rather too general terms. In some districts the question of behaviour might be taken, perhaps, rather strictly, while in other districts it might be looked at in a more indulgent way. They ought to have specified in the Bill really what wilful act of misbehaviour was intended. Such a term should be easily capable of explanation. In any amending Bill which might come before the House—and he hoped they would have one before very long—he hoped the question of cottage homes would be considered for these aged pensioners. In many rural districts they might very readily have groups of cottages, and they knew from the Report of the Housing Committee that it was much cheaper to build cottages in rural districts if they could only build twelve or fifteen together. If they could have an alternative side to the scheme by which pensionables might be allowed the option of a cottage and special treatment under the Bill it would certainly be a very valuable alternative to give, and it would relieve the present housing difficulty in the rural districts. The hon. Member for Preston seemed rather to scout the connection between the Bill and the advantaging of the labour market. The connection, to his mind, was very close, and he knew from conversations he had had with railway men and others that there would be considerable inducement for them to take a pension and make way for younger men in particular employments. Only the other day he was speaking to a railway employee, who told him that if he gave up his employment he would be entitled to a pension of 9s. 10d. a week, but he preferred to continue in his work in which he was receiving 16s. or 17s. a week. That man would be entitled under the Bill to his State pension, and

it would be well worth his while to consider the propriety of taking up his superannuation allowance and of making way for a younger man. They would find that would apply in many instances. Although the Bill fell to some extent short of what they really required as a complete measure, at the same time he regarded it as a very substantial instalment, and he should certainly give it his heartiest support.

*MR. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington) said he considered that the Government had made a fair and honest attempt to deal with a very difficult problem. As the Prime Minister said in his speech on Friday evening last, they must cut their coat according to their cloth. He did not think the financial commitments of the nation could be turned to better advantage than in making provision for a scheme of this kind. What had struck him most in regard to this measure was that those responsible for it had a certain fascination for the figure 5 and multiples of that figure. As for the age-limit, he was of opinion that with the limited means at their disposal sixty-five was a limit which the Government could not adopt, although he thought that seventy erred on the side of severity. He hoped, however, that some means would be found of adopting sixty-eight or sixty-nine as the limit. In fixing the amount of the pension again the figure five came in. They had to bear in mind that this was a scheme which had to be developed by stages, and, personally, he would have been satisfied if a commencement had been made at 4s. a week, and on this basis to give the benefit of the scheme to 500,000 persons £5,200,000 would have been required. If that were done on the estimated amount the Government were prepared to allocate for this scheme for the next financial year, £800,000 would be available, and he would view with pleasure the expenditure of that money in giving the full pension to old married couples or to aged brothers and sisters living together. He wished something in the nature of a pension could be given to certain deserving persons who were at present in receipt of Poor Law relief, and asked the Government to consider a suggestion that persons who had not received such relief before they attained the age of sixty-eight years should not be debarred from receiving pensions. That would not cause any great additional burden on the fund, and it would be a recognition that a certain number of respectable people were deserving of pensions, although they had been obliged to have recourse to Poor Law relief through dire necessity. He was glad that the Government had announced that they had an open mind in regard to the income limit. There would be difficulty in arranging a sliding scale, but better results might be obtained in that direction if the scheme were started on a basis of 4s. as the amount of the weekly pension. He welcomed the Bill as evidence of a desire to redeem a pledge, of which the fulfilment had been too long delayed; but he hoped that, during the Committee stage, some of the disqualifications set forth in the Bill might be lessened.

*CAPTAIN CLIVE (Herefordshire, Ross) considered it would be ill-advised to reject the proposal of the Government and to disappoint the high hopes which had been raised in the minds of those aged persons who had attained, or were approaching, the age at which they had been led to expect that they would receive pensions. He thought a contributory scheme would be sounder finance and wiser economy; but the present scheme having been brought in ought now to be carried into effect. After a person had reached the age of seventy years, which there was Biblical authority for regarding as the allotted span of human life, it was not unreasonable that the Government should provide him with relief if he needed it. Such provision being made, it would be easier at some future date, after the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law had been considered, to bring in a scheme for contributory pensions for persons who had not reached the age of seventy years. He welcomed the expression given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of his opinion that in any future development of the scheme the age-limit should not be reduced to sixty-five years, but pensions be given to those below the age of seventy years who needed them as infirmity pensions at any age. The Registrar of births and deaths had shown that the average expectation of life was now about two and three-quarter years longer than it was twenty years ago; and, therefore, if sixty-five years might then have been a suitable age for pensions, it was not so suitable now when men lived longer; and this greater longevity was especially the case in some of the highly organised trades represented by hon. Members sitting below the gangway. The Government had not made it clear who were to contribute to the scheme. Was it to be the income-tax payer or was the cost to be equally divided among the taxpaying population according to their means? All they had done was to provide for a quarter of the smallest amount that would be required, and the rest of the money and its inevitable increase were to be left to a very uncertain future. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that £7,500,000 would be the ultimate cost; but there was no ultimate cost, for the outlay must progressively increase every year, and they were embarking on an expenditure the end of which no man could foresee. It would have been better to have laid the foundations more surely and for the Government to have taken the nation into its confidence and shown how the money for the first year was to be found. The only hint obtainable from the Budget speech was that the Sinking Fund had now reached so high an amount that it was possible to make a raid upon it. He could not think that that was very wise finance. The country stood committed to borrowing £100,000,000 for Irish land purchase and our credit had fallen so low that we were unable to meet our liabilities, and could only raise an inadequate amount every year towards that scheme. That alone seemed a sufficient reason why they should provide for old-age pensions by taxation, and if they had shown that they could pay for them out of taxation instead of lowering the credit of the country it would have greatly raised it. By the introduction of this scheme the Government had helped themselves very considerably at the last two by-elections and would derive benefit at any other by-election during the next twelve months, but what would happen after next year's Budget would be very different. The country would then have to look not merely at the spending but at the raising of the money. That was a point of view that had hitherto prevented Governments on either side from bringing in a scheme for an object of which everybody approved. The Government had enjoyed the popularity that would obviously accrue from their proposals, but while they had called the tune they had not yet paid the piper. Supposing they went out before next year's Budget they would stand convicted as a Government that had left enormous liabilities to their successors in order to enjoy a fleeting popularity. Since the Chancellor of the Exchequer held the view that the present scheme should not be extended at some future time by the lowering of the age-limit, he thought it would be very important that not only the right hon. Gentleman, but the Government should pledge themselves in that way. His noble friend the Member for East Marylebone had pointed out what a dangerous temptation there was to make promises at election times in regard to the extension of the scheme. It was obvious that the making of such promises would be very popular, and would result in the catching of votes, but it was a thoroughly bad thing that the old-age pension scheme should be used for vote catching purposes instead of being the result of careful deliberation by the Government. He thought it was most desirable that the Government should announce their determination to bring in some scheme of insurance in respect of infirmity pensions, such as had been suggested by the hon. Member for Preston. By pledging themselves to such a policy they would prevent the gambling for votes towards which there was so great a danger on the part of both parties when elections came on. He did not see his way to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston, because he thought it was impracticable to withdraw the scheme of the Government now. The scheme was before the country, and it must stand, and whichever Government was in power next year must find some means or other of paying for it. It was very unsatisfactory that no one yet knew how it was to be paid for. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might call it a contributory scheme if he liked, but nobody knew who was to contribute. He thought that before the scheme was presented to the House they ought to have been told one way or another who were to be the contributors. It had been pointed out by many Members that this non-contributory scheme must sooner or later become universal, and the only reason that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not made it so was that he could not afford to pay for it. He demurred to the use made of this subject at election time and to the charge thrown at that side, and particularly against the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, that they had broken their promises to the people. There was never a promise. All that they could do was to bring the subject forward and his right hon. friend by doing so had led to its fruition. No stigma attached to hon. Members on that side for not having been the first to introduce it. It was until now impossible from a financial point of view, and possibly the Government was in too great a hurry even now, but whether that was so or not the nation was to be congratulated on its introduction, and he trusted that it might produce the good results that they all wished for it.

*MR. W. H. LEVER (Cheshire, Wirral) heartily supported the Bill and thought that no apology was due from him for intervening in the debate. He was very glad of the opportunity of congratulating the Government on having redeemed the pledge given by them twelve months ago and on having done so in a Bill which, whilst open to many improvements on certain points, and which did not satisfy all of them, was, nevertheless, drawn on right lines, and was capable of being the foundation of a thoroughly sound old-age pension scheme. He had listened with very great pleasure to the very able exposition of the contributory scheme given by the Member for South Manchester. The best part of it was the conclusion when the hon. Member assured them that he did not bring his proposal forward in substitution of the Government Bill, but rather as an addition to it. It always seemed to him that contributory proposals in reference to old-age pensions rested on two fallacies. In the first place, they rested on the fallacy that the scale of contributions would be forthcoming in all the circumstances of changing life, and even at a certain period of life during the conditions at that period. In regard to education they might have had school attendance officers, with all the existing machinery for the carrying on the educational work, and the desire of the parents that the children should be educated, but unless the State had found the money they would never have enjoyed the benefits of a universal free education. There was an even greater fallacy on which these contributory schemes rested—the fallacy that there would be investments available for the funds contributed without entirely disturbing and breaking up the very foundations on which the investments of this country rested. The money contributed between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one in sums of £10, and invested so that at compound interest it would provide the amount required, could only be invested in trustee securities They knew what disruption there was in the price of Consols when by paying off Consols and thus increasing the requirements of trustee investments the price was forced up to a perfectly absurd figure, and how, when the Government ceased to pay off Consols, the price fell to below their real value. They would have this disturbing element in any contributory system of pensions. The only sound business proposal to deal with old-age pensions was to take the money out of the pockets of the people by a just and fair system of taxation, and to distribute it in the same year in which it was collected. Every industry in the country would be stimulated. The one would receive their pensions, and on that basis they would build up a sounder England than we had to-day. The points in the Bill that required amendment were the discrimination that was to be made in reference to Poor Law relief, and as to the character of the applicant. He thought they might brush all that aside. They would agree that, when a man or a woman had reached the age of sixty-five or seventy, they had not lived very bad lives, and that the adjustment of right or wrong had been made automatically by nature. This inquisitorial attempt at discrimination between people who had lived lives which ought to entitle them to esteem and respect was something which every Member of the House would resent applied to himself, and they ought certainly not to apply it as the basis of a national scheme of pensions. It could never be justly administered, even if it went by the strict letter, because the circumstances of each man's or woman's life and the reason why they had to apply for outdoor relief would require a discrimination which could not be exercised. He understood that the money was to be distributed through the Excise officer in some way. He suggested that the registrar's office would afford a better machinery for distributing the pensions. They had the particulars as to age, birth, and so on. With regard to the provision that pensions should be limited to people with incomes of less than 10s. a week, of course the ideal which they would all like to see realised was a universal system; but, whether that was possible or not, if they had to impose an income limit, the amount should be such as to remove all temptation to falsify, or manipulate, the income in such a way as to receive a pension to which the applicant would not otherwise be entitled. Five shillings added to 30s. would not offer the same temptation as 5s. added to 10s.; and if they wanted to encourage thrift, and were desirous of doing what they could to encourage people to look at the 5s. a week as additional to any sum they might save, they might raise the limit to 30s. a week. With reference to the German system, there was no reason why we should not have it if it were desired. An addition might be made to the Workmen's Compensation Act, under which a man or a woman through sickness could be provided for by contributions from both men and masters. But that was entirely distinct from old-age pensions. In the case of old-age pensions, it was not to be a question of whether a man had been in employment or had been working at home. The two things must not be confused. With reference to the raising of the money there need be no difficulty. In a free trade country—and he hoped England would always remain free trade—the income-tax must be a permanent source of revenue, and it must be on such lines as to commend itself to everyone as perfectly just. That was not the case with the income-tax on our present system of taxation. Under the present system every working man, although he escaped income-tax, paid a much larger proportion of his income in taxation than did the wealthier classes. If they were to deal with this question on a sound basis they ought to have a graduated income-tax. He did not think the working man would object to pay income-tax if the tax commenced at a perfectly reasonable scale. Indeed, they ought to welcome it, not only because it would provide funds for old-age pensions, but because it would provide a system of taxation which must result in the working man paying less and the rich man more than at present, although in both cases they would pay more equitably. They could not have a graduated income-tax unless they started with incomes of small amount. Incomes of £1 a week might pay 1d., and from that they could work upwards to, say, 2s. in the case of incomes of £10,000 a year and upwards. There was at present a feeling of injustice, because large sections made no contribution to the income-tax. If that was a war tax then every class ought to contribute, for when we were entering on the serious matter of war everyone should realise exactly what it would mean. On a properly graduated system of taxation not only on incomes, but on land and other sources of wealth, must rest the taxation of this country if we were to remain true to the tradition of free trade and to fulfil that social programme of which old-age pensions was only an item. That the scheme of old-age pensions would grow was quite correct. As they cultivated a feeling of sympathy for the aged people so they would extend their care of them to the homes and to the infirmaries. As it had been with education so it would be with old-age pensions, and that was the feature of the scheme at which he most rejoiced. It would extend and grow, and with this growth and extension the trade would increase, and so would our ability to bear the burden. If we started on right lines we had nothing to fear of the future.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes) said that whatever else might be said of the scheme of the Government, the more one examined it the more one recognised that it was admirable in form so far as the rural districts are concerned. He would not go into the question of the wages of agricultural labourers; everybody knew that they were low, and that in their case a contributory scheme was entirely out of the question. The income limit of 10s. would not exclude a very considerable number of agricultural labourers from applying for a pension. A man in the rural districts, who found himself at the age of seventy in the position of enjoying an income of 10s. a week, was no longer an agricultural labourer; he had risen to the position of an overseer or smallholder. He would like to testify to the fact that the efforts made in the rural districts by agricultural labourers for their provision were made solely through friendly societies. Some of those societies paid 3s. 6d. a week to people of sixty-five or seventy years of age. Others paid a lump sum down, with which the recipient could make his own provision. If the Bill came into operation, in January next a man receiving parish relief would get no pension. If, on the other hand, he had been able through a friendly society to make some provision he would receive a pension. To that extent the Bill would not discourage but would promote thrift, and lead to the starting of many other friendly societies. The provision which would remove from the scope of the Bill all persons who had received parish relief from January last would work very harshly in a great number of cases. Obviously, to include all these cases would add enormously to the cost, but the House would see how hardly it would operate, for instance, in the case of a woman left a widow in early life without means, and compelled to accept parish relief. She would lose all claim to an old-age pension. That was a provision that could not be allowed to remain permanently on the Statute-book. Suppose a man broke down and was not able to go on; no doubt if the misfortune occurred just before he reached seventy every effort would be made by his family and friends to keep him till he could qualify for a pension; but if the breakdown occurred in his early sixties, there would be great difficulty in keeping him till he could qualify. If the Government could not go to the whole extent of removing the poverty disqualification, he would ask that, at any rate, they should try and soften it down in the hardest cases. As had been pointed out by Mr. Charles Booth, the granting of a pension to the aged had the very strong point that it would improve the relations between children and their aged parents. In his own experience, as a member of a board of guardians, he found the grant of 5s. a week to an aged person was of the greatest benefit to the relations between those persons and their children. Great sacrifices were made by children for their aged parents, but it could hardly be expected that such sacrifices should be made as to render the position of the children unsafe. The effect of a pension being granted would be that parents could be taken into the homes of their children, not as a burden on the children but as paying guests, bringing with them an income which would have a great effect in the improvement of the relations. The age-limit, although high, was not too high so far as the rural districts were concerned. There were numbers of people of over seventy at work, and many who were over eighty, and although everybody looked forward to the time when the age-limit would be reduced, he thought this was a good beginning. The test he most disliked was the industry test. It seemed to him and he submitted to the House that in considering the application of a man of seventy years of age for a pension, they had no right to go back to what that man was at the age of twenty-five or thirty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to share this opinion, because he had said that the industry test was not to be applied to anybody who, before he was fifty, had contributed for ten years to a friendly society. That certainly was an improvement. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would interpret the words "friendly society" in the widest possible way so as to include agricultural village clubs, and then the sting, to a large extent, would be taken out of that provision. The hon. Member for Worcester had referred to the number of village clubs that had come to grief and left their members, the labourers, with nothing to rely on. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would realise that those men were exceptionally deserving, and would see that they received good treatment under this Bill when it became an Act, and had not to undergo this test. But was this test to apply to women? The provision, as anyone could see, was drawn by men for men and could not apply to women who, so far as the rural districts were concerned, did not go out to work as they used. They went out less and less, and were now more able to attend to their domestic work at home. It was only right that if this provision was not to apply to subscribers to a friendly society, it should not apply to women. He saw quite as much danger in inquiring into the past of a woman as into the past of a man, and it was not right that a woman of seventy should be barred from a pension because of a mistake made fifty years before. He wished to make the system as broad as possible, and did not wish the Pension Committee to make exhaustive inquiries in the way indicated. He wished to see the committee, as far as possible, a judicial and not an administrative committee. Let them prove simple facts, and let the rest be done by the pensioner, and let them not have the power to refuse or to reduce a pension. He looked with great suspicion on this clause for the reason that it would make the committee too administrative, and for the same reason he saw no utility in a sliding scale so long as the pension remained at 5s. He hoped the Committee would have little to do except to satisfy itself that the statutory provisions to enable a person to claim a pension were fulfilled. Let them keep these Pension Committees as free as possible from personal, local, or political bias, because, as hon. Members would realise, in the country districts these committees would either be appointed by the county council or be the county councils themselves. He had profound mistrust in the proposal that any one class should sit in judgment upon any other class, and for that reason he desired the work of the Pension Committee to be confined within the narrowest possible limits. Generally, he desired to thank the Government most heartily for what seemed to him a step really in the right direction. He was not thinking so much of the hard cases which were unavoidable in any possible scheme or of those who were excluded, but of the more than 500,000 old men and women who would get their pension in the first week of next January. Of all the measures the Government had tried to carry through, none seemed to him to deserve more what he thought was the best thing one could say of any legislation, and that was that it would add to the sum total of human happiness.

*Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said that, in rising to intervene in the debate, one felt at some little disadvantage after all that had been said. All the points, he supposed, were traversed yesterday when he was unavoidably and unfortunately absent, and they had been again traversed that day. The utmost he could hope to do would be to invest some of them with a little distinctive interest as from the labour point of view. He rejoiced that old-age pensions had, after all, been brought out of the region of theory and abstraction and had been put into the four corners of a Bill. He hoped it would not be thought that he took only a narrow and parochial view when he said that the Budget this year had an interest for him very largely centred in the question of old-age pensions. The great bulk of the old had been overtaken by want as well as by age, and he had looked forward with some hope and eagerness to see what the Budget was going to do for them. Looking back at the Budget as a tale that had been told, and having regard to the contents of this Bill, he rejoiced to know that, at all events, for 500,000 of our poor old folk, who, as regarded the great bulk of them, were poor because they had had no chance of being otherwise, there was brought within short measurable distance some honourable recognition and relief. He wished to associate himself with the remark made earlier in the evening by his right hon. friend the Member for Morpeth, when he said that, on the whole, the Bill had met with a very favourable reception from all sides of the House. It had certainly been opposed, and there had been an Amendment put forward by the ingenious and genial Member for Preston, but, with all due deference to that hon. Member, he should say it was a wrecking Amendment, and that the weakness of it was demonstrated by the speech made in support of it. The Amendment embodied the principle of State insurance against the risks of life. He had nothing to say against State insurance against the risks of life, but it would be a long time before such a scheme could mature, and that was sufficient to remove it from the category of reasonable Amendments to this Bill, because what they sought to do by the Bill, and what he ventured to say the country had made up its mind should be done, was to provide old-age pensions for the old who were with us now. The Amendment, therefore, could not possibly touch it. They were told by the hon. Member for Preston that their ideal should be to raise wages. He agreed, and he would suggest that the best way to raise wages was to provide employment; but what possible bearing had it upon the particular question before the House? The men and women whom they hoped to benefit and to serve by the Bill were all long past the age when they could earn any wages at all. The old, the hon. Member for Preston said, had no more claim upon the State than any other people. That might be a matter for argument, and he was not committing himself one way or the other, but he was inclined to think that of all the pathetic figures amongst them the most pathetic was the unemployed man. He was somewhat astonished and annoyed to hear an hon. Member on the other side of the House say that a man had the right to work. If that was so, how was it that they had so many unable to find it? He believed that they ought to provide work and thereby remove a great many of the problems with which the House had to deal. If a man had work and regular and higher wages, he would be able to make some provision, which he was not now able to make, for old age, and would by his own personal effort remove a good many of those questions with which they had to deal. If he had been speaking immediately after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, now the Prime Minister, when introducing the Budget five or six weeks ago, he would have said that the scheme of pensions, or rather the scheme that was then foreshadowed, would have been fairly satisfactory. It would have been a clean cut instalment of old-age pensions upon the principle that both his colleagues and he desired to see carried into effect; but the Bill did not bear out the speech of the Prime Minister in several aspects. Before dealing with them, however, he thought he ought in fairness to mention one or two aspects in which the Bill did come up to expectations, and upon which he thought they might fairly and frankly thank the Government. In the first place, the Bill provided that the money should be drawn from the Imperial Exchequer. It, therefore, recognised that the care of the old was a national duty and a national matter in contradistinction to a local concern. In that respect the Bill was entirely satisfactory. Of course, he knew that as time went on the charge upon the Imperial Exchequer for pensions would become more, and the charge upon the local exchequer for pauperism would become less. He knew perfectly well that the Bill meant the relief of the local rates, and to some extent, therefore, a relief of the landlords, but that was a matter with which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could and, he hoped, would deal somehow or other in the future. It was a matter which need not concern them now. He rejoiced that the Bill was non-contributory in character. He endorsed what had been said as to the impossibility of the industrial workers of the country making any provision at all for old age. He was not going to be led off into any comparison between the working people of this country and of Germany. He was concerned now only with old-age pensions being granted in a manner suitable to the conditions of our own people, and in harmony with the genius of our own people. He knew a great deal had been done in Germany in the way of contributory pensions, and he knew also, because he had studied it on the spot, that a large amount of the money paid by those who benefited under those schemes was used up and wasted by the cost of administration. He knew further that the German people could be sifted and regimented in a manner in which the people of this country could not possibly be treated. Contributory schemes of pensions were for that reason altogether unsuitable to the peoples of this country. Something had been said with regard to trade unions having already worked on contributory principles and allusion had been made to a particular society of Conservative workmen in Strood, who, to some extent, had provided against the various mischances of life and, as he gathered, for old-age pensions as well. He had had some experience of voluntary organisations in the way of providing for old-age pensions as well as other things, and it might be some little information to those who had this particular Strood society in mind to know that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers paid a good many of their members pensions, and that it cost them just about £4 per head per annum, of their membership, to provide them. Was it not mere foolishness to talk of agricultural labourers with 10s. or 12s. per week, of women whose wages were so miserably small that the marvel was they kept body and soul together, and of large numbers of industrial workers whose wages never averaged more than £1 per week, contributing anything out of their scanty wages towards making provision for their old age? He was therefore glad to know that the measure swept out of the field all contributory schemes that had been talked about, not only now but in his humble judgment for all time, and, therefore, in that aspect of it it wiped out any invidious distinction between one class and another. In the third place, the Bill was satisfactory to his mind because it would apply mostly to women. It was one of the saddest features, perhaps, of our present industrial and social system that the heaviest part of life's burdens fell upon the weakest amongst them, and in that category, of course, must be placed the women folk. Their wages were smaller, and they therefore had less chance of making any provision for their old age as compared with men, and they were entitled to more consideration and help, and he was glad that under this Bill they got it. Very few of them got 10s. a week, so that the limit did not apply to them, and therefore in large part they would benefit by the Bill. He had seen many of these old bodies sitting at the fireside of sons or daughters who maintained them, though sometimes not much better off than the old woman herself, and he knew the Bill would carry with it not only a feeling of independence on the part of these old bodies, but would improve the filial feeling between mother and son or daughter. Of course, he assumed that these old persons would not be debarred from getting their pensions because they were thus provided for. The suggestion had been raised in more quarters than one that a person, living with a son or daughter, whose income averaged a sum which per head of the house might come to more than 5s., would be debarred from the pension. It was so monstrous that he refused to entertain it for a moment, but he asked the right hon. Gentleman to reassure many people who had that idea in their mind. So much for what might be called the satisfactory point of view. When he came to the discriminatory clauses a great falling off had to be noted, and he submitted that those clauses would have to be drastically remodelled. The Bill certainly gave effect to the Prime Minister's promise, and in form dissociated pensions from the Poor Law, but while it gave that in form it refused it in fact. It did away with the Poor Law, but it set up a new inquisition under the Local Government Board. The Prime Minister, in introducing the Budget, conveyed the idea to his mind that the discriminatory clauses would be automatic in character, and would include only criminals, aliens, lunatics, and actual paupers, and although he was no lover of discrimination at all, yet he had in his mind that, as sensible men, they should accept these discriminations, because they involved no inquiry into the man's antecedents other than would be given by police and other public records. He would like the right hon. Gentleman to tell the House the meaning of the words "or other" in subsection (a) of Clause 3, which said a person should be disqualified while in receipt of such parochial "or other" relief as disqualified for registration as a Parliamentary elector. Although it might not be meant to apply to men or women who had had to go into almshouses, or something of that sort, a great deal depended on the administration and working of the Act, and they wanted to guard themselves against any unfair and uncharitable interpretation of these words. It seemed to them they might very fittingly be struck out altogether. But the clause excluded any person being in receipt of parochial relief—

> "And, until Parliament otherwise determines, if he has at any time since the first day of January, 1908, received, or hereafter receives any such relief."

He left out of account the indoor paupers. There might be a great deal to be said for excluding them. Many of them he knew were physically unfit to live outside on 5s. a week, and a great many of them had no relations with whom to live. But how about outdoor paupers, many of whom had been hoping against hope for better times, and for the advent of this Bill, and many of whom had received outdoor relief of 2s. or 3s. per week, and some of them only medical relief, during this very year? What were they going to do with them? It would be a cruel thing to cut these men or women out from the operation of the Bill, especially having regard to the words of the Prime Minister, "actual paupers," when introducing the Budget. He had received a letter from an old man a week or two ago, part of which he would read. He said—

> "Last September I collapsed entirely through old-age, and in November had to apply for relief from the guardians. They were kind enough to grant me 5s. a week. Now, according to the newspapers, we are debarred from the benefit of old-age pensions, although we have never received at any time Poor Law relief. I have been a respectable man all my life, but have, through inconstant work, not been able to save for old age, and have no income and no other help. When it comes before the House for any amendment of the old-age pension scheme, I hope you will consider my case. I was born in 1837."

He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman that this old man should not be excluded, but that the promise given only six weeks ago should be honourably kept. But worse remained in this discriminatory clause. They found that a man was to be debarred who had refused to work or habitually refrained from working when physically able to work. Let it not be thought for a moment that the Labour Members wanted to condone laziness, but what right had they to say that a man had refused to work or had refrained from working? Had work been provided for him? On the contrary, there were many men walking about now out of work, and some of them demoralised by want of work, and this Bill proposed that now, having been got down as a result of this demoralisation through want of work, they should turn round and kick them because they were down. But even worse remained. Let the House note the odious offensiveness of the terminating words of the subsection. He was to be debarred if he had been brought into a position to apply for a pension through his own wilful act and misbehaviour. That was to say that the fact of applying for a pension was to be taken as the sign manual of degradation. It was not a question of giving a pension as a civil right, but because he had got into a state of degradation. Moreover, it gave the Paul Pry's of the pension committee an opportunity, without stint or limit, to roam at will over the whole life of the poor unfortunate man, to open up the cupboards of his past life and to reveal hidden secrets and bring to light memories of long gone by. Let him remind the Prime Minister of his own words in regard to this matter only a few weeks ago—

> "We do not go back on the past. As to character the less you go into character, short of actual convictions for crime, the better. All these suggested remedies, thrift, good repute, etc., when you go into them break down."

Why go back then, as they did in this Bill, on a man's past life, and, he might ask, why go back on the Prime Minister's speech of only a few weeks ago? He offered this criticism in no unfriendly spirit to the Bill and, let him add, in no unfriendly spirit to the Government. And, having regard to the fact that the Prime Minister had coupled old-age pensions with free trade, he would say further that they on the Labour benches had done their little best to support free trade, and to assist in the maintenance of that system which they believed had given this country pride of place among the nations, in financial stability, in wealth, and in many other respects. They had denounced tariff reform as a mere delusion and snare, a mere collection of disjointed arguments and antiquated and crazy illustrations, calculated only to get them out of the frying-pan into the fire. But their objection to this Bill was that it did not give the poor people, and especially old people, a fair share of the benefits of free trade. They were told that the country had paid off £43,000,000 of Debt in the last three years. They were glad of that. They knew that the reduction of indebtedness did something to lessen interest charges and improve credit, but he thought that the credit of the country was involved in the provision for old people a good deal more than was expressed in the £1,200,000 that was sought to be taken this year. These penalising clauses were a departure from the universal principle which, as they understood, the Prime Minister and the late Prime Minister were both pledged to on 20th November, 1906, when a deputation waited upon them. There was also the test with regard to income, which was perhaps worse still, because it was a direct discouragement to thrift. It was unfair to those who had made personal efforts to save in the past, and it would discourage personal effort in the future. There were in the country no less than 252,000 people who were paying into agencies for old-age pensions and other provision for old age, and the effect of the Bill on those men who had paid into agencies for relief in old age would be almost to convince them that they might as well spend their money as save it, because in the end they would be no better off. It would besides lead to evasion as well as injustice—to evasion, in which the honest man would come off worst and the man who could tell the biggest lie best. He believed that the provision dealing with married couples was based on the fallacy that married couples would be able to live more cheaply and that their joint expenditure would be less than the amount spent by two single pensioners. As a matter of fact the single pensioners would, for the most part, live with relatives. He trusted that this point would be reconsidered. Then as to the pension committees to be set up, he believed it to be a defect in the Bill that these bodies were not to be of a representative character. These co-opted committees, he feared, would become the happy hunting ground of all kinds of faddists, like the friendly society official, who looked upon himself as being superior to other people. They did not want that kind of man on these committees, and he hoped that the Government would reconsider this provision to the extent of making the committees representative. The town councils should keep this subject in their own hands. Let him say again that he was glad that this Bill had met with such a chorus of approval, and he hoped the Second Reading would pass, and that it would be amended in Committee. The case for old-age pensions had been argumentatively fought out and won. The only objection now was the cost, and that was not conclusive. A good deal had been said upon that point, but nobody could deny that the wealth of the country had increased and was increasing year by year. £37,000,000 had been added last year, according to the Prime Minister, to incomes assessible to income-tax, and these incomes had now reached the fabulous sum of nearly £1,000,000,000 per annum. Therefore, the cost ought not to be a bar either to this or even to a much more comprehensive measure. For those reasons he hoped the Bill would pass, because it would be a step towards making old age a little more comfortable and a little more dingified than it had hitherto been.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down is the last and certainly not the least able of those blessers of the Bill who have spent all their time in criticising it. I did not hear all his speech, but he certainly ended with a blessing upon the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. All the intermediate parts between the preliminary blessing which I imagine and the final blessing which I heard were entirely occupied with explaining how very inadequate the proposals of the

Government were, and how little calculated they were to meet the just expectations of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway whom the last speaker represented. Now, Sir, through the whole of this debate I have been glad to recognise that it has been characterised, so far as my judgment goes, by great ability in many of the speeches which have been delivered from many points of view; and I frankly admit that I think this is especially creditable to the House of Commons, because they are discussing this measure under circumstances of difficulty which have never occurred before in the whole history of legislation in this House. Are we in a position to judge of the merits of the Bill on which a decision is about to be taken? Have we been given by the Government who have devised the Bill the material for forming an estimate as to its value? Even the Government themselves talk of it in tones which certainly do not tend to add confidence to the House as regards the merits of the proposals they are laying before them. I had to condole with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a previous debate in having to defend a Budget which was not his own. I now have to condole with him in defending the proposals of a Bill in which, again, he has the responsibility common to all members of the Cabinet, but in the devising and constructing of which, I imagine, he was not more consulted than his other Cabinet colleagues, and the responsibility for the details of which necessarily rests, not with him, but with the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, the present Prime Minister. It may be due to that circumstance that the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke as a somewhat embarrassed step-mother of the merits and demerits of the offspring towards which she stood *in loco parentis*, and that most of his speech was occupied, not in defending the Bill under his charge, but in explaining the various concessions which he proposed to make in order to meet the various objections which had been raised. Before I sit down I shall have to say something upon what seems to me the extraordinary want of consideration which the Government have given to a measure which touches the social life of the country at every point, and which claims to be a great measure of social reform. There are and must be two quite separate questions which the House has to take into account in forming their judgment, and on neither branch have the Government condescended or perhaps been able to give us the information absolutely necessary before we can come to any kind of final conclusion. What are those two great branches? We may call them the financial aspect of the question and the social aspect. Let us take them separately. What about the financial aspect? That has been airily touched upon by one or two Gentlemen below the gangway; it has not been touched upon at all by the Government. It has been touched upon by the last speaker, and at least one other Gentleman, who spoke as representing the Labour Party, and they dealt with it in a spirit of happy self-confidence and with a sanguine view of the national resources which I do not think is likely to be shared by any responsible Chancellor of the Exchequer. I think it was the hon. Member for the Gorton Division who, when faced with this question of cost, said: "Oh, after all, you could put £40,000,000 more upon the land." Another method equally simple, equally just, not as yet mentioned, but which I daresay will be mentioned in the future is to repudiate the interest on the National Debt—a method which would be quite as honest. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that the scheme was arbitrary in the sense that it was wholly illogical. He could not see why it should stop at seventy years of age, why a pension should not begin at sixty-five, and so on, and he admitted that there were many just claims, natural claims, that would appeal to every human mind. He said "Remember I have only a certain amount of money to give." That is quite true. If social reform could be paid for out of some illimitable Fortunatus's purse the task of the social reformer would be comparatively easy, and the task of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not deserve the well-earned remuneration of £5,000 a year. Unhappily that is not the case. You cannot measure the taxable resources of this country by the simple and *naif* methods which commend themselves in some quarters. You easily come to a point—are you sure we are not very near it?—when the addition to taxation, at all events upon the existing lines—perhaps upon any lines—may do as much or more harm to the very classes you wish to benefit than the legislation about which you are concerned will do them good. The Government are asking us to consider a great question of social reform without giving us the smallest information on one of the most important matters that ought to be discussed by this House before we decide on the policy we are going to adopt. You are going to spend £6,000,000 next year, £7,500,000 the year after, and in the absence of some perfectly unknown and hypothetical reform of the Poor Law you are going to spend £11,000,000 or £12,000,000 in a very brief period. We have not received from the Government the smallest hint of the methods by which that immense sum is to be obtained. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway are, at all events, consistent. They say, "We are sure that it can be obtained, and whether it can be obtained or not the thing must be done." Nobody out of fairyland can provide all the money which we should require to carry out objects which would receive assent and approval in every quarter of the House. In considering these schemes you must compare your method of meeting the liabilities involved in the scheme with the advantages which the scheme is to produce. We have not been given materials for that comparison. The Prime Minister seems to think it is a most unreasonable suggestion that we should ask how this immense liability is to be fulfilled. We have never asked for the details of next year's, or any year's, Budget. We have asked—and can any reasonable man in this House say we were wrong in asking?—for some adumbration, some outline, of the methods by which this new and immense liability is to be dealt with under the present or any other system of taxation. We have not merely to consider how we are to get the money, but how we may best employ it. Have the Government thought of that question? Supposing the £6,000,000 next year, the £7,000,000 the year after, and the £11,000,000 in the very near future are all at the disposal of a happy and wealthy Chancellor of the Exchequer. Are you sure this plan is the best method of using the money for the benefit of the wage-earning classes? What means of coming to a conclusion on that point have the Government given us? None at all. They have not described the comparative merits of different plans; they have not even investigated the plans which are adopted in other countries. The Unionist Government have been reproached for having omitted to deal with this question. Sir, no member of the Party to which I belong need ever be ashamed of discussing in this House the performances of various Governments in respect of legislation on behalf of the working classes. It may be a matter of good fortune—I think it is—I do not wish to arrogate the merits of one Party as against another, but I will not admit the merits of the other Party as against us. These questions of social reform as connected with the wage-earning classes must all be taken as in connection with and as part of one plan. All cost money, and you have to consider how the money can best be spent; and when I remember that my friends on this bench and I were responsible for free education, and for the Workmen's Compensation Act, I feel that even if this measure was all that its authors claim for it, I should be more proud to be the author of an Act benefiting the children of future generations of working men and of a measure which relieves from undeserved misfortune those who fall in the actual industrial combat than even of the best thought-out scheme that deals with only a fraction of the population who are over seventy years of age. The interruption of the hon. Member below the gangway was perfectly irrelevant when he said: "What about the South African War?" But when it is said that we have been indifferent to the question of old-age pensions, my right hon. friend near me gave certain reasons why the late Government from a departmental view were not able to deal with them; but there was a much broader and bigger reason when he was at the Local Government Board, and that was that we had not the money. The Report of the Commission on which, as I understand, this Bill was framed was made in 1899.

Does anyone suggest that in 1899 or for many years after that, either the Government of the Party to which I belong, or any other Government, could have found the necessary money for dealing with this question? The question is impossible. It may be said that the South African War was not then in progress. But that is not a subject which is relevant to this debate, and as everybody knows there are differences of opinion in regard to it. The present Government say they are now in the fortunate position to find enough money to deal with it. They were not able to do so in their first or their second year, I suppose, but now they say they are in a position to find the money. They do not tell us how they have got it. [OPPOSITION cheers, and MINISTERIAL counter-cheers.] Well, they say they have got it. Surely, as they admit that they were incapable from want of money of dealing with the question before—as they admit, in other words, that the financial question does come in, and that it is impossible for the best-intentioned Government to deal with this question without adequate means—they are bound to tell us what has happened since last year which enables them to look forward in the future to this enormous revenue which alone would justify them in introducing this scheme. Then and then only shall we be able to compare, as wise men must compare, the cost of the enterprise with the benefit that enterprise is going to bring to the class it is designed to benefit. Now, Sir, I turn to the social aspect of the question. I am not one who thinks that necessarily a system of old-age pensions, even if it is non-contributory, will destroy the friendly societies. I lay down no such abstract proposition as that. It would be very dangerous to do so. It is possible that a Bill may be so framed as to destroy them; but I certainly do not dogmatise on the subject. And it will be remembered that the Report of the Commission of 1899 did not recommend a contributory scheme. I am far from saying that, had we the money for all the reforms connected with this subject and for our other national necessities, a non-contributory scheme might not be devised which would be without the evil effects which some of my friends greatly fear. What I complain of is that the scheme of the Government is an attempt to deal with a very small fragment of a very large subject in a very incomplete and fragmentary fashion. Of course, it is true that if you wait for legislation on a great question until you can bring in an all-comprehending Bill you will wait for ever. I admit that, but there is a great difference between bringing in a Bill of an all-comprehensive character, which it is impossible to do and would be folly to attempt, and a policy which has obviously taken into account all the factors of the case, which is working up to a prepared plan, which looks before and after, sees the dangers, and which, though it cannot build the edifice at one sweep of the wand, at all events builds room by room with careful regard to the design of the whole structure. Is there any sign that the Government have kept that consideration in view? I listened with great interest to the speech of the Secretary for War last night, and although I do not know that the right hon. Gentleman contributed much to the debate, he did remind us that this is only a part in a vast series of schemes and measures extending beyond what is technically known as the Poor Law, embracing medical and many other matters, all intimately inter-connected, all designed for one object—the improvement of the condition of the wage-earners of this country. The right hon. Gentleman, I think, did great service by reminding us of this. While we all wish to keep the pension system apart from the ordinary system of the Poor Law, though I do not think this Bill does so, it is perfectly impossible to consider it apart from the Poor Law. The very fact that you have to distinguish the man who receives a pension from the man who receives Poor Law relief means that you have to consider them in juxtaposition and see that one does not trespass on the other. How can you possibly do that, when your Poor Law is in such a state that, by universal admission, it requires reform, when the Royal Commission on the Poor Law is not far from reporting, and when everybody knows that their Report or Reports, however much they may differ, will not sustain the existing system under which since 1834 the Poor Law administration has been carried on? How can you deal with the question of the deserving poor, whom you do not wish to be touched with the Poor Law taint, unless you know what your Poor Law is? It seems to me folly to try to do so. Observe what is the result of your attempt. You have been forced, by the hasty and ill-considered action of the Government, into making arbitrary distinctions which are perfectly untenable, not merely in argument, but in practice. Gentlemen below the gangway are much concerned about one distinction—that of age, between sixty-five and seventy years. I agree that, probably in urban districts, and partly in rural districts, the number of people who are unable to earn their living, having led honourable and laborious lives, is very great at sixty-five or even at sixty. Is that the only arbitrary limitation that is made? On the contrary, you are spending this money, money that is straining to the utmost the resources of the Exchequer, solely upon persons over seventy. There was pressure to extend pensions to persons sixty-five years of age; but even if you adopt sixty-five years you have left untouched several of the greatest problems which are confronting us. You have left absolutely untouched the case of the disabled and of the young widow left with a family of children. We have had pathetic pictures drawn of the aged poor. If it were our business, would it not be still easier to draw a pathetic picture of those in the prime of life deprived, by bereavement or other cause, excluding that of accident and provided for by the Employers Liability Act, of their means of support, and to say that if we have money to deal with, if the system of taxation of this country enables us to find these £6,000,000 or £7,000,000, their lot is at least as worthy of consideration as is that of the limited class with whom this Bill deals? May I point out that you have not well chosen the recipients of your favour for one particular reason, to which very little reference has been made? Of the poor under seventy, how many are there who ought not to be for their own sakes in an infirmary? You make no provision for accommodation in infirmaries that does not have the workhouse taint, that is not a part of the workhouse. You are therefore using all the money which we are told you can squeeze out of the taxpayer, by means at present unknown, for the benefit, not of the people over seventy, but of that fraction of the people over seventy who can live in their own homes, and to the exclusion of those over seventy who ought to be in infirmaries, and of everybody under seventy who from old age or any other cause not connected with their own fault are unable to earn a living. That is so one-sided, so arbitrary a method of dealing with the subject, that it requires explanation; and when I am told, as I shall be, that we can only deal with one section of the question at a time, which is surely true, you ought to consider the whole area of your choice before you decide which is the section you are going to deal with and how you are going to deal with it. I do not see any sign of such consideration on the part of those responsible for this Bill. There is one other point with which I must deal. The Secretary for War told us—and it is absolutely true—that if you take a survey over the whole field of aid to the helpless poor you must have classification. His actual phrase was that classification was the essence of the

Government Bill, and it is the essence of any Bill which deals with this subject as a whole. You must exclude from your pension scheme certain classes the definition of which is not yet clear to the House. Nobody pretends that you ought to treat everybody alike. The man who has done nothing for himself, or who has made himself helpless at a relatively early age by excess or intemperance, cannot have the same treatment as a man who by the visitation of Heaven or the lapse of time is incapable of earning a living. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway have struggled in vain in their speeches to get out of the difficulties which that involves. But what is the principle of your classification to be? The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a most impassioned appeal to the House in favour of some kind of classification. He said—

> "How can you ask the man who pays the taxes required for these pensions to spend money on a man known to be a wastrel, a drunkard, a danger, it may be, to society, certainly no credit to himself, his friends, or his country?"

The question was a right one to put, and everybody will agree that you must make a distinction; but when we are told by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that an adequate distinction will be found if you exclude from inquiry everybody who at any time of his life has for ten years subscribed anything to any benefit society, what consolation is that to the taxpayer whose money is spent in pensions devoted to a man who, if anybody in the world, ought to be under the Poor Law system and subject to its disabilities? The scheme of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway is quite impossible; it would never be tolerated; in fact, they do not propose it themselves seriously. They do not propose that public assistance should be given without distinction to everybody who requires it. They do not propose to abolish the Poor Law system altogether. Then what are you going to keep it up for? For the undeserving? For much more than that; for everybody under seventy, who is in need of it at any time. If you are going to keep it you must distinguish, and then you bring in all the evils and difficulties to which these gentlemen have so forcibly called our attention. In my opinion, the Government would have served far better the House and the country if they had really given us some material on which to form a judgment of their scheme. We had put before us yesterday, by the hon. Member for Preston, in the speech to which reference has often been made in this debate, an account of the German system. I am not going to discuss the German system. I have no materials for discussing it. But at all events, two things are quite clear—in the first place, that the Government have never considered the German system and have never brought it under any careful examination; and, in the second place, that, whatever demerits there may be in the German system, it does these things—it gets money out of the employer; it gives the workman who gets the pension a feeling that he has some right to it; and it provides for the difficulties of the workman at every stage of his life. Now those are three advantages so transcendent and so great that the least we could have asked of the Government was, instead of bringing in a Bill which touches but the fringe of this question, which does nothing for anybody under seventy, which does nothing for anybody over seventy who is too ill to live in his own house, at all events to give us the material for judging as to whether either the German system or some modification of the German system adapted better to our own national habits and customs could not have been adopted. By this the burden on the general Exchequer could have been diminished, and the employer of labour might have been brought into contact with the problem which so nearly concerns him. It would really have distinguished between your new system and the old Poor Law system, between which there will be a very faint line under the plan of the present Government, and above all would have attained that which the present Bill does not pretend to do, by dealing with the difficulties, the sufferings, and the accidents incident to the life of the labouring class, not merely in that extreme period of existence in which only a small portion of our race survives, but at every period of their lives and in a manner which would have made them feel that they were collaborators in an immediate and personal sense in all that is being done for them and enabled you to differentiate fully and completely between your pension plan and your scheme of Poor Law relief, which ought to be deeply divided, not merely in the text of your laws, but in the imagination and sentiment of every section of the labouring class of the country.

Mr. ASQUITH: I have listened with the closest attention to the right hon. Gentleman's speech, and I confess that, while it has left me in doubt on many subjects, it has left me in doubt particularly on this one—how is he going to record his vote. Is he going to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill, or is he going to vote for the Amendment of my hon. friend the Member for Preston, or is he going to take the third course and not vote at all? We shall see. But for the moment I confess the speech which he has made, as far as I understand it, gives the House and his followers no kind of indication as to which of those three courses he proposes to take. There are some other topics in the right hon. Gentleman's speech which, though not, I think, very relevant to the question before the House, if time were longer, would afford me a somewhat tempting field. He, I think, very inadvisedly and very unnecessarily undertook to answer the question how it was that during the ten years from 1895 to 1905, when he and his Party exercised undisputed authority in both Houses of Parliament—they, who, as some of us remember, came into power in 1895 with election addresses and election cards on which old-age pensions were writ large—how it was that during the whole of those ten years not one step was taken and not one thing was done which would cause the fulfilment of those pledges. The right hon. Gentleman finds an easy way of escape from that rather embarrassing problem by referring us to the South African War. Yes, Sir, but the South African War did not break out till the end of the year 1899, and during the four years from 1895 to 1899, these right hon. Gentlemen, in the possession of large surpluses, inherited from the Liberal Government, and a great and growing source of revenue in the death duties, contented themselves—and this is the financial achievement for which those four years will be mainly remembered—in annually raiding the Sinking Fund. And it is the right hon. Gentleman with that record behind him who asks me and my colleagues to-night why we have not attacked this question earlier.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I never asked that.

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes, the right hon. Gentleman said: "You are in your third year." The answer is a very simple one. We have been engaged in paying off the debts left us by our predecessors. And when he asks me and asks the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer from what source we are going to meet the admittedly large expenditure which this great scheme of social reform must necessarily involve, my answer is that our first duty was to put the finances of the country and the credit of the country into such a condition that they could meet additional claims upon them. That we have done. We have paid off £40,000,000 of the Debt which you left behind you; we have reduced the interest of the Debt by £1,250,000, and this country is in the same position as regards its national liabilities as it was when it was a much poorer country twenty years ago. When the right hon. Gentleman repeats the request made so often in the course of these debates that we should disclose the precise financial proposals, the taxes to be imposed, the taxes to be increased, the taxes to be remitted during the course of the next three years—he does not ask, I agree, for precise details; he asks for what he calls an adumbration—my answer to him is, if his request is for light, will he be content with that which an adumbration must necessarily reveal—namely, a more or less misty and undefined shadow? Beyond that no prudent financier could possibly go, and our answer to the suggestion that we have not either in possession or in prospect the resources adequate for this purpose is that we have restored the credit of the country. If we pursue, as we intend to pursue, a system of free trade finance, we have no doubt whatever that the resources of the country will be equal to the strain put upon them. We are at this disadvantage to-night, that there is no distinct issue between the two sides of the House. All, or almost all, on both sides of the House have professed themselves in favour of the principle of old-age pensions; and when once you have cleared away the only two controversies of principle—the controversy between a universal and a partial system, and the controversy between a contributory and a non-contributory basis—all that remains is differences as to how we are to define the measure of basis and the method of discrimination. As to a universal system I say nothing. It has not been seriously pressed upon us from any quarter of the House in this debate and it is quite a sufficient answer to say that the financial exigencies of the country do not admit of its adoption. But I should like to say one or two words upon the question of a contributory or non-contributory plan. When we ruled out, as we have in this Bill, the contributory plan we were speaking with reference to one problem only—namely, the best provision for bettering the lot of the aged poor. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that that is but a small fragment of a larger question; but you will never deal with the larger question unless you deal with it by instalments and take it step by step. There are other and equally important aspects of the matter which will have hereafter to be considered. Speaking for myself, and, I think, for my colleagues, I have never said or suggested that, as to some of them, at any rate, it may not be possible or even desirable to combine voluntary effort with State assistance. But with reference to this particular problem, all contributory schemes which have been or can be suggested are, in our judgment, inadequate and futile for several reasons. In the first place, whatever may be said about the experiences of Germany, they are of necessity slow and dilatory in their operations. In the next place, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out yesterday, the experience of the friendly and other societies of that country shows that superannuation for old age is the contingency against which thrift and prudence, however well organised by voluntary effort, are least able to make any adequate provision. Further, it is admitted on all sides that these contributory schemes of necessity exclude women, and give a preferential advantage to particular forms of saving. Most important of all, under no contributory scheme yet suggested can you bring under the beneficent operations of your law many of those whose needs and merits are greatest, but have never had an opportunity of making contributions to a friendly society. When these arguments are all arrayed in their cumulative force as against the adoption of a contributory scheme to meet this particular problem, they are, in my opinion, altogether irresistible. Whatever, therefore, may be its merits as a supplementary, we feel bound to reject it as an alternative. I think that was the issue intended to be raised by the Amendment of my hon. friend the Member for Preston. May I say with all respect to the hon. Member that he is one of our most valuable Members? He always says cogently, with courage and with felicity, things which some of us have thought but have ceased to think, and which others still think, but are perhaps a little reluctant to say. Mr. Disraeli once, speaking from this place, said he had created a constituency—the University of London—in order to provide for Mr. Lowe a seat in this House. I trust that my hon. friend may long retain the confidence of the electors of Preston; but if any of those mishaps which befall the best of us from time to time should occur to him, I think it would be almost a constitutional necessity to provide some means for his special access to this House. My hon. friend the Member for Preston knows a great deal about a great many things; but, if I may again speak in perfect good-humour, and with all respect, there is one subject in regard to which his knowledge is in need of improvement, and that subject is the character, the disposition, the habits, and the motives of the average British citizen. His most admirable argument—the whole of the argument—which he addressed to the House yesterday was founded on his observation of the German system. By the way, I wonder if the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition is in favour of the importation into this country of the German system. We heard a very striking and well-reasoned condemnation of it uttered to-night by one of his supporters—a prominent tariff reformer, the hon. Member for Stepney. But that by the way. The German system has great merits, though I think in some respects they have been much exaggerated; but it could not be transplanted here, for one simple and sufficent reason—that it is founded on the two pillars of inquisition and compulsion. Whatever the hon. Member for Preston may think you cannot brigade the industry of this country. You cannot, even if you would, set up and work here the complicated and irritating machinery by which in Germany the necessary funds for a provision against sickness and old-age are extracted from the pockets of both employers and employed. I will undertake to say that whatever party came into power and attempted to deal with this question of old-age pensions, nine men out of ten in the party would be against the introduction of any system based on the German model. If that is so, the question, and the only question, comes to be this, that, assuming discrimination to be necessary—we having now ruled out both universal and contributory schemes—are the discriminations proposed in this Bill sound and wise? I am repeating what has been said by my colleagues when I say that this scheme is not put forward by us as a final scheme. It is limited in every direction, by the pressure of financial exigencies. It is a new departure leading, as we believe, along an unmeasured road of future social progress; and it ought not to be judged by its possible and ultimate development, not by ideal standards, unattainable under existing conditions, but according to whether this new departure is made on sound statesmanlike lines. I have been told again and again that the Bill as presented to the House differs from the scheme adumbrated—if I may use the word—by me in my Budget speech. I say that in essence and substance there is no difference whatsoever. In that speech I had to cover a great deal of ground, and I daresay in my attempt to combine fulness with brevity I may have omitted some points of detail and have dealt perfunctorily or inadequately with others. But what do all the criticisms amount to? They all relate to disqualifications which the Bill imposes on persons otherwise entitled to receive pensions. First of all are paupers. I said that actual paupers would be excluded, and when I said actual paupers perhaps I might have used a more specific phrase, but I thought that all would understand that I did not mean those who might be paupers within twelve months, but those who were actually in receipt of Poor Law relief. The exclusions have been criticised, and it is impossible not to sympathise with the individual hardships that may arise; but what is the alternative, what is the reason for them? In the first place, as I have said over and over again, this is not a permanent, but a provisional scheme; it deals with this following year, but it does not prejudice any action Parliament may see proper to take in the years to come. In the next place, as my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said, it is a far more liberal provision than has ever been suggested in any scheme submitted to any Legislature in any other country. Lastly, if you do not make this temporary disqualification, you provide boards of guardians with the irresistible temptation to get rid during the remaining months of the year of their obligations for outdoor relief, and by January next there might be 200,000 or 300,000 additional applicants, and the cost would be measured at little less than £3,000,000. Well, that is out of the question. You must accept, we ask the House to accept—not as part of the principle, certainly not as a permanent factor in the case—to accept as a necessary condition of this first step in a great reform the temporary exclusion of recipients of Poor Law relief. I must omit reference to the sliding scale from want of time, and have to say a word or two on the question of the test of character. I adhere to what I have said that there must be no roving retrospective inquisition into the moral character and antecedents of the applicants. In New Zealand and in Denmark and in the Commonwealth of Australia, all very democratic countries, a man may, say for five or ten years, have to satisfy the vaguest, most shadowy of all tests—a person of good repute. There, if you like, would be a field for invidious discrimination by the pension authority, but we have deliberately eschewed and abandoned any such test as that. I am not concerned at this moment—the point will be dealt with fully in Committee—to vindicate the precise phraseology in which we have endeavoured to define what is called the wastrel. Everybody admits that if you could get a definition of wastrel, clear, precise, concrete, which would exclude him and under which there would be no risk of excluding anybody else, that would be a not unsatisfactory accompaniment of a pension scheme. I make this admission to hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House below the gangway—I think some of the definitions in the Bill are open to criticism, and they will when we come to the Committee stage, at the suggestion of the Government themselves, be altered. I think they might lead to that very class of inquiry which we are most anxious to avoid, and I say again, speaking for myself and the Government as a whole, we will not consent to the introduction of any discriminating disqualification on this ground in the Bill unless we are satisfied it would apply, or would generally be construed and recognised as applying, merely to the wastrel and the loafer and to nobody else. The right hon. Gentleman has suggested to us that we might postpone dealing with this matter for some time. It is quite true that we cannot settle this question or any of the other questions which are connected and allied with it by the waving of a wand, to use his own expression. There is no Parliamentary short-cut to the millennium. But are we, because of the difficulties and because of the complexity of the task, to sit still, with dumb lips and folded arms and bewildered brains and palsied energies, while this great procession of the poor and necessitous and unbefriended linger out the last days of lives the strenuous years of which have been given to the service of industry and of the State? We say not, and we ask the House to say not, but to take the first step towards the accomplishment of this great and beneficent work.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 417; Noes, 29. (Division List No. 118.)

AYES.

Abraham,William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.HerbertHenry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell,SirJH.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner,J.F.L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,Rt.HnSirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis

Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunne, Major E. Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew, W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grove, Archibald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir(Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, James Fitzalan(Sheffield
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King, Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G.(Leominster
Lambert, George
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lamont, Norman
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Leese, Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy(Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H.(Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah(Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal, E)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon(Launceston
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn. A. C.(Kincard
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)

Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Rainy, A. Rolland
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Raphael, Herbert H.
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro',
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
ScottA.H.Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smith,Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanier, Beville
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E.
Thomson,W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampt'n
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinson, James
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Winterton, Earl
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Guinness, Walter Edward
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Montgomery, H. G.
Morpeth, Viscount
Nield, Herbert
Percy, Earl
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley GeorgeD.
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Harold Cox and Lord Robert Cecil.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Adjourned at eighteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 17*th June*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Electric Lighting Provisonal Orders (No. 1); Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2).

Also the Certificate that no Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bill:—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.].—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported from the Select Committee with Amendments.

North-East London Railway Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed for Tuesday next.

Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill; Lincoln Corporation Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments; and passed and returned to the Commons.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendments proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The report of Amendments to be received to-morrow.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendment proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The report of Amendment to be received to-morrow.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived, and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.—Ordered that Standing Orders Nos. 72 and 82 be suspended for the remainder of the session.

METROPOLITAN POLICE PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª and committed.

Moved, "That Standing Orders No. XXXIX. and 102B be considered in order to their being dispensed with."—(*Lord Denman.*)

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Is the Bill on the Table?

Lord DENMAN: It should be on the Table.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Perhaps the noble Lord will tell us why it is necessary to suspend the Standing Order.

Lord DENMAN: I believe the Home Office is desirous of getting the Royal Assent given to this Bill to-morrow, when a Royal Commission sits.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: I venture to suggest that when the Standing Orders are to be dispensed with, some explanation should be given to the House as to why that course is necessary.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into Committee, agreed to. House in Committee accordingly. Bill reported without Amendment. Standing Committee negatived. Bill read 3ª and passed."

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TREATY SERIES, No. 15 (1908).

Parcel Post Agreement between the United Kingdom and Panama; signed at Panama, 13th April, 1908.

CANADA.

Report of Mr. W. L. Mackenzie King on his mission to England in connection with the immigration of Asiatics into Canada.

MINES AND QUARRIES (ACCIDENT AT ROACHBURN COLLIERY, CUMBERLAND).

Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by J. B. Atkinson, M.Sc., one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Mines, on the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland, on 28th January, 1908.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ACT, 1906.

National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Annuity) Order, 1907; National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Transferred Property) Order, 1908.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Order by the Secretary for Scotland dated 18th May, 1908, providing for the early closing of shops in the burgh of Cromarty.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL PARCEL POST (EGYPT)).

The Foreign and Colonial Parcel Post Amendment (No. 20) Warrant, 1908, dated 27th May, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

A Bill for the Amendment of the Marriage Act, 1823—Was presented by the Lord James; read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 100.)

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes before Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter before Four o'clock.]

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 17th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Ards and Bangor Railways.—Petition for additional Provision; referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Cheshire Lines Committee Bill; Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment; Draycott Gas Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill, with Amendments. Amendments to:—Skegness Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [Lords]; Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords; Great Western Railway Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to consolidate the enactments relating to Agricultural Holdings in England and Wales."—[Agricultural Holdings Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to consolidate the enactments with respect to Small Holdings and Allotments in England and Wales."—[Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer on the Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Company further powers with reference to capital; and for other purposes."—[Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to provide for the substitution of a Memorandum and articles of association for the provisions of the Northern Assurance Acts, 1865, 1874, 1889, and 1899; for the registration of the Northern Assurance Company under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1907, as a company limited by shares; and for other purposes."—[Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to constitute and incorporate a Gas Board for the urban districts of Wath-upon-Dearne and Bolton-upon-Dearne, in the West Riding of the County of York, and to transfer to and vest in such Board the undertaking of the Wath-upon-Dearne and District Gas Company, Limited; and for other purposes."—[Wath and Bolton Gas Board [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to empower the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the borough of Keighley to purchase further lands in connection with their water undertaking; to extend the time for the construction of certain waterworks; to empower the Corporation to provide and work motor omnibuses; and to extend the powers of the Corporation with regard to their gas and electricity undertakings and with regard to the health, local government, and improvement of the borough; and for other purposes."—[Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for making further provision respecting the capital and undertaking of the Metropolitan District Railway Company; to authorise the abandonment of works authorised by the Metropolitan District Railways Acts, 1897 and 1903; and for other purposes." [Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confer further powers on the Ravensthorpe Urban District Council in regard to their Water and Electricity Undertakings; and generally to improve the local government of the district."—[Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].

Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [Lords]; Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS BILL.

Petition from Corwen, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Harrow Road, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Monmouth; and Stratford; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Harrow Road; and Torquay; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Alresford; Beddgelert; Bury St. Edmunds; Cesarea; Coalville; Cooling Court; Dinnington; Edinburgh; Forest Gate (two); Brynrhos; Harthill; Hastings; Leeds (two); Llanllyfni; Llanrug; Long Eaton; Miles Platting; Morfa Bychan; South Petherton; Stratford (three); Stromness; Waenfaur; West Ham; and Witney; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Kensington, against; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Upton in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SCOTTISH LAND BILL.

Petition from Zetland, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Annuity) Order, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of National Galleries of Scotland (Application of Transferred Property) Order, 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, providing for the Early Closing of certain Shops in the Burgh of Cromarty [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIAN PRODUCTS (FOREIGN TARIFFS).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 25th May; Mr. Remnant]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 181.]

MINES AND QUARRIES (ACCIDENT AT ROACHBURN COLLIERY, CUMBERLAND).

Copy presented, of Report to the Secretary of State for the Home Department by J. B. Atkinson, M.Sc., one of His Majesty's Inspectors of Mines, on the circumstances attending the accident which occurred at Roachburn Colliery, Cumberland, on 28th January, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TREATY SERIES (No. 15, 1908).

Copy presented, of Parcel Post Agreement between the United Kingdom and Panama. Signed at Panama, 13th April, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Range Finders for Scottish Coastguards.

SIR ARTHUR BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will consider the advisability of supplying the coastguards of the North of Scotland with a small Army range-finder, warranted to indicate the distance of a ship from shore up to a range of 5,000 yards, and thereby to some extent relieve the duties of the gunboats assigned to the service of policing the North Sea.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) I am making inquiries as to the practical value of the instrument in question for purposes of this kind.

Appointment for Certified Teachers.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the authorities of the training colleges for teachers in public elementary schools are finding it impracticable to obtain posts of employment for most of the newly-certificated teachers trained in training colleges during the years 1906–1908; whether he has any information as to the effect on the training colleges (residential and day) and on the students of such colleges; what number of teachers not trained in training colleges were certificated by the Board of Education after the last certificate examination; and whether the Board will take steps to secure that certificated teachers should be college trained.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The number of newly-certificated teachers seeking employment is considerable, and the process of distribution among the schools in which their services are required must necessarily take some time, but I am not aware that they are experiencing unusual difficulties in obtaining appointments. In fact such evidence as the Board possess indicates that the demand for teachers is still in excess of the supply. If the gradual reduction in the size of classes, which has been taking place during the last few years, is to continue, and I think it is most desirable that it should continue, it is essential that the annual output of teachers should not be curtailed. Consequently, until the training college accommodation has been so extensively increased as to provide a sufficient supply to compensate for the annual wastage, I do not think it would be advisable, or indeed possible, to limit the recognition of teachers as certificated to those who have completed a course of training. 5,059 teachers who had not been trained in training colleges passed the last certificate examination.

Hall Marking of French Watch Cases.

MR. MOND (Chester): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that proposals have been made by the French Government to admit French gold and silver watch cases without their being required to be assayed and hall-marked in this country; and whether, in view of the English system of hall-marks being of a more difficult character, he will make no alteration in the existing law.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I may refer my hon. friend to the reply given to the Question addressed to me yesterday by the hon. Member for the Oswestry Division.

Members of Parliament in Receipt of Colonial Pensions.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will state the number of Members of the present House of Lords, and also of the present House of Commons, who are in receipt of a pension for service in the Colonies.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) If my hon. friend will move for a Return I will endeavour to obtain the information desired.

Position of Superseded Transvaal Civil Servants.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware of the existence of any reason for His Majesty's Government differentiating in the treatment of the Governments of Natal and of the Transvaal; and whether, if the British Government proposed to call the attention of the Governor of Natal to the obligation imposed by Sec. 14 of the Act No. 37 of the Colony of Natal Acts of 1897, the Secretary of State will also call the attention of the Transvaal Government, or the Governor of that Colony, to the neglect to observe the obligations of His Majesty's Government towards those Civil servants of British origin who have been retired or retrenched, either on the abolition of their office or their supersession by persons of Dutch or Boer nationality, without pension, in disregard of the fact that they were employed upon the faith of the Home Government, and upon the terms that their position should be both permanent and pensionable.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) A pension system existed in Zululand before annexation to Natal, and in the legislation passed to effect annexation existing rights were safeguarded. No general pension system existed in the Transvaal at the time of the establishment of responsible government, but a number of officials had been transferred with pensionable service to the Transvaal from this country or other Colonies, and the pension rights of all these officials were protected by an Ordinance passed in 1906. With regard to Sec. 14 of the Natal Act 37, of 1897, I beg to refer the hon. Member to the reply which I returned earlier in the day to another Question on the subject.

Irish Post Office Stores Contracts.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Postmaster-General with reference to his reply of 17th May, 1906, whether he will direct the Controller of Stores to send copies of all tender forms for Irish Post Office stores to the Dublin Industrial Development Association, in order that they might bring the same under the notice of interested Irish manufacturers.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am prepared to send to the association copies of tender forms relating to Post Office stores which can be ear-marked for use in Ireland whenever it seems likely that such a course would lead to tenders from Irish manufacturers. As a rule engineering stores cannot be ear-marked for use in any particular part of the United Kingdom.

Irish Post Office Engineering Services.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he will give directions that future Estimates for the Post Office engineering services will show the expenditure in Ireland as distinct from Great Britain, as in the case of the postal services.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will consider the matter before the Estimates for 1909–1910 are prepared. It is not free from difficulty.

Delay in Appointment of Conciliation Boards for Irish Railways.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can explain the delay in appointing the conciliation boards on certain Irish railways; and whether he will arrange to have them appointed.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Irish railway companies were not represented at the conferences which led to the agreement of 6th November last, and after the publication of that agreement some time was necessarily occupied in the consideration and arrangement of a detailed scheme of conciliation boards that would be suitable to the circumstances of railways in Ireland. Schemes have now been formulated for six out of the seven principal Irish lines, and in the case of three of these nominations of candidates for election have been received. Voting papers have also been issued on two of the railways, and the results of the elections on one line (the Belfast and County Down) are on the point of being announced. I am informed that if any temporary delay has occurred it may be attributed to the desire of the Irish railways to select the best points in the various English, Scottish, and Welsh schemes.

Salaries of Irish Veterinary Department Officials.

Mr. DELANY (Queen's County, Ossory): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether, in reference to the three chief officials of the Veterinary Branch of the Department of Agriculture, one of whom enjoys a salary of £850, being £150 in excess of the sum fixed for the post, while the other two have had their salaries increased by £100 and £75 respectively, he will state how increases of this magnitude were secured by these officials; and whether he is to be taken as consenting to the attitude of the said officials towards gentlemen of fourteen years service in the same branch, whose eligibility for entrance to the Second Division is being ignored.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The salary of £850 is the amount paid to the chief clerk of the entire Department, not of the Veterinary Branch merely, since his appointment to that post in 1900. Any increases of pay allowed in the other cases referred to have been granted on grounds which commended themselves both to the Department and to the Treasury. The last part of the Question is, in effect, a repetition of the reflection on the higher officials which, as has already been stated more than once, is absolutely unfounded.

Conditions of Roads in Richmond Park.

Mr. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been called to the rough and gritty condition of the roads in Richmond Park, which renders them very inconvenient and unpleasant for cyclists and others; and whether he will take steps to have the roads put and maintained in better condition.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The roads have been much injured by motors; and, being composed of flint, they are always somewhat rough after a period of dry weather. In wet weather, however, they are as good as or better than macadam roads and better adapted for cyclists and pedestrians than any macadam roads would be. The work of watering and rolling is continually going on, and no other remedial measure is practicable.

Suggested Abolition of the Dublin Branch of His Majesty's Stationery Office.

Mr. FIELD: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether, in view of the fact that the Post Office now undertake all post, telegraph, and telephone work for Government Departments, he would favourably consider the advisability of abolishing the Dublin branch of His Majesty's Stationery Office and transferring its duties to the Irish Post Office, and so curtail administrative expenses and reduce the number of independent Government Departments in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It would not be practicable to transfer the duties of the Stationery Office to any other Department.

Revenue from Penny Duty on Marine Policies.

MR. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give an estimate of the amount of revenue which would be yielded by a uniform stamp duty of one penny per policy on all policies of marine insurance and a uniform stamp duty of one penny per policy on all voyage policies not at present chargeable with the said duty respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is that the yield would be reduced from about £250,000 to about £5,000 a year. I am unable to give a definite forecast of the loss which would follow from the proposed penny duty on voyage policies, but it would be very substantial.

Rebates on Sugar Duty.

MR. McARTHUR: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received a letter from Mr. J. Crosland Graham, on behalf of the British Sugar Dealers' Association, stating that, so far as can be ascertained as the result of inquiry made by him, the sum of £38,399 would suffice to meet the claim for a rebate equal to the difference between the old and new duties on stocks of duty-paid sugar, molasses, invert sugar, and glucose held on 18th May, in all cases where the duty paid was in excess of £50; and whether, having regard to this statement and to the evidence tendered in support of it, he will ask his official advisers either to reconsider their opinion that £200,000 would be required for the above purpose, or to furnish the calculations upon which that estimate was based.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I have received letters in the sense indicated. The estimate given in my reply to the hon. Member's Question of the 29th ultimo, as to the cost of granting a rebate equal to the difference between the old and new duties on stocks of sugar duty-paid at the higher rate, was based on the inquiries and calculations made by my official advisers. I am satisfied that that estimate was reasonable, and I do not think, therefore, that any useful purpose would be served by re-opening the matter in the manner suggested by the hon. Member.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of James Quilty.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have received an application for untenanted land from James Quilty, who was evicted from his holding at Grouselodge, in the County of Limerick, on the Conyers Estate; and, if so, what action do they intend to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received the application in question and, after due inquiry, have decided to take no action in the matter.

Evicted Tenants in County Monaghan.

MR. LARDNER (Monaghan, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many of the forty evicted tenants in the County of Monaghan, given in the Return prepared pursuant to Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, have been reinstated with the assistance of the Estates Commissioners; and how many have been reinstated by the landlord or provided with new holdings on the sale of the estates to the tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Six were reinstated with the assistance of the Estates Commissioners and thirty-four were restored by the landlords, and all forty subsequently became tenant purchasers. Twenty-two other evicted tenants were reinstated by landlords, but had not up to 31st December last, signed agreements to purchase.

MR. LARDNER: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state how many of the forty evicted tenants in the County of Monaghan, named in the Return prepared pursuant to Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, are persons who were scheduled by the Estates

Commissioners as suitable persons to be provided with new holdings or reinstated in their holdings; and how many persons scheduled by the Estates Commissioners as suitable persons in the County of Monaghan have not as yet been reinstated or provided with new holdings.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is none. Thirty-two evicted tenants in the county remain unprovided for, whom the Estates Commissioners have decided to be suitable to receive holdings in the event of the same becoming available.

Pay and Pensions of Foremen in the Army Ordnance Department (Ireland).

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will give full particulars of the pension scheme and scale of pay for foremen in the Army Ordnance Department in Ireland; whether he will say if foremen accepting the scheme must cease all connection with trade societies; and, if so, with what object this prohibition is made as regards foremen being members of a trade union.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) A scheme has been approved for the admission of principal foremen and foremen of the Army Ordnance Department (including workshop foremen) at stations at Home to pension rights under the Superannuation Act of 1859, subject to the following conditions, viz.: (*a*) The pensionable establishment to include all principal foremen and 85 per cent. of the approved establishment of foremen. This establishment to be filled up by selection at once. Future admissions to be by selection, as vacancies occur, from a general list to be kept at the War Office. (*b*) Compulsory retirement not later than sixty-five years of age. (*See* Regulations for Civilian Subordinates in Army Departments, 1904, Paragraph 4). (*c*) Pensions on the Civil Service scale, *i.e.*, one-sixtieth of wages for each year of a pensionable service; a maximum of half the "hired" service rendered after the age of sixteen years and before date of admission to the pensionable establishment (date of Civil Service certificate) to count for pension, under the usual conditions. Existing rights under The Superannuation Act Amendment Act, 1873, and The Superannuation (War Department) Act, 1890, will not be affected, but persons coming within the provisions of the latter Act will reckon towards pension on retirement half service only for the period between 31st December, 1889, and the date of the Civil Service certificate. (*d*) Connection with any trade society to cease. (*e*) No payment for overtime to any principal foreman or foreman whether on the pensionable establishment or not. (*f*) Limits of age for admission to pensionable establishments twenty-four to fifty. (*g*) Examination for admission to pensionable establishment by Civil Service Commission:—(1) Handwriting, plain and legible; (2) Spelling, a moderate proficiency; (3) Arithmetic (first four rules simple and compound, including English weights and measures, reduction, proportion, vulgar fractions and decimals, excluding recurring decimals). (*h*) Fee for examination 2s. 6d. (*i*) Physical fitness certified by medical officer. Those principal foremen and foremen who were appointed before 1st April, 1908, to be exempt from the limits of age, educational examination, and payment of fees. The following scales of pay have been approved, with effect from 1st April, inclusive, viz.: Principal foremen, 40s. per week, rising by annual increments of 1s. per week to a maximum of 54s. per week; foremen, 28s. per week, rising by triennial increments of 2s. per week to a maximum of 36s. per week; workshop foremen, not supervised by a master artificer, 40s. per week, rising by triennial increments of 2s. per week to a maximum of 48s. per week; workshop foremen (supervised by master artificer), 38s. per week, rising by triennial increments of 2s. per week to 46s. per week; assistant foremen, 23s. per week, rising by triennial increments of 2s. per week to a maximum of 27s. per week. The rates of pay are subject to the usual deduction of one-tenth if the recipients are in occupation of public quarters. All principal foremen and foremen to come on to the new scales of pay from 1st April as a condition of the grant of pension, except those who have been reverted from higher grades in consequence of reductions of establishment and who are receiving higher wages. Principal foremen who have had no increase within the year preceding 1st April may be given an increment of 1s. within the maximum of the scale from that date inclusive. Foremen and assistant foremen who have had no increase within the three years preceding 1st April may be given an increment of 2s. within the maximum of their scales from that date inclusive. Ordinary leave, with pay, will in future be allowed in each financial year for the following periods, and Paragraph 48 of the Regulations for Civilian Subordinates in Army Departments will be amended accordingly: Foremen and assistant foremen, twelve days; principal foremen, twenty days. It is considered desirable that all connection with any trade society should cease in order that the foremen may be rendered more independent of the men serving under their control.

Arming of the Yeomanry.

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the future position of the Yeomanry as the Cavalry of the Territorial Force, they will be re-armed like Cavalry of the Line; if so, at what date; and, if not, on what grounds the rifle and bayonet will be treated as cavalry weapons.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The Yeomanry will not be re-armed like Cavalry of the Line. They will be armed with the short rifle and sword bayonet, but will keep the short bucket at present in possession. The short rifle will be issued before next year's training. Yeomanry are trained in accordance with the instructions contained in Appendix IV. of the Cavalry Regulations. Their training is the same as that of Cavalry except that they are not trained for shock action mounted.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Atlantic Fleet—Battleships under Repair.

*Mr. BEAUCHAMP (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty how many battleships belonging to the Atlantic Fleet are undergoing refit or repair, the respective dates when they were placed in dockyard hands, and when the repairs may be expected to be completed; and whether all or any of these ships would, during their period of repair, have been ready for sea at four days notice if called upon.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): The following battleships of the Atlantic Fleet are now undergoing refit or repair: "Exmouth": Undergoing annual refit in accordance with the approved programme; taken in hand 4th May, and to be completed on 25th June. "Russell": Undergoing annual refit in accordance with the approved programme; taken in hand 20th April, and to be completed on 27th June. "Albion": Taken in hand for boiler defects on 4th June, and to be completed on the 30th June. The work involved is such that these ships could not be ready for sea at four day's notice. As these ships will be required to take part in the visit of the Atlantic Fleet to Quebec, it has been considered desirable to anticipate the ordinary arrangements, and carry out the annual refit of the "Exmouth" and "Russell" concurrently at the present time instead of consecutively.

*Mr. BEAUCHAMP: Is not that a transgression of the Order of 1905, which lays down that only one battleship of the Atlantic Fleet shall be under refit or repair at one time, and that she shall be ready for sea at four days notice if called upon.

Mr. McKENNA: My hon. friend has correctly stated the terms of the order. As these ships will be required for the visit of the Prince of Wales to Quebec, under the special circumstances the repairs have been undertaken at the same time.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Why is not the "Renown" referred to in that Return, seeing that her guns are out of her at the present time and she is of no use as a fighting unit of his Majesty's Fleet?

Mr. McKENNA: Obviously, I must have notice of that.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): Will the right hon. Gentleman say how many battleships have been at present taken out of the fighting line?

MR. McKENNA: I must have notice of that Question too.

Army Boot Contracts.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a few contractors are supplying Army boots closed by machinery, whereas the specifications call for hand stabbing sides and counters; that a slip has been attached to the specification permitting machine closing when the contractor prefers it; and that a majority of the contractors are still working on the old system; whether he can now say what rebate the contractors who use the machine have made to the War Office for this cheaper and inferior way of closing Army work; and whether there is any practical man in the Department who has advised this change.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): As explained to the hon. Member in answer to his Question of 6th April, the experiment of asking for hand closed boots only was tried last year, but the Department has now reverted to the alternative of hand or machine closing, which is found to work quite satisfactorily. It has not been considered possible to require any rebate of price in cases where permission was given last year to continue the delivery of machine closed boots in place of the hand closed experimentally ordered.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Does the right hon. Gentleman doubt the statement contained in the Question that the majority of the contractors have been and are at the present time closing by hand?

MR. HALDANE: We have given them the alternative. Our contracts are based on their having that alternative of closing by hand or machine, and we find that satisfactory.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that those who close by hand are at a considerable disadvantage as compared with those closing by machinery in the matter of cost of production?

MR. HALDANE: No. They are not at any disadvantage, because we have put out the tenders giving them the alternative and their tenders and their prices are based on the general method they adopt.

Army Boot Contracts in Bristol.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that Army work is being made in the Bristol district by operatives unused to this class of work; that the condition of employment and statement of wages agreed to by the War Office for the Northamptonshire district are not being observed there; whether he is aware that the conditions affecting the contractors have been altered for the sole purpose of meeting this new district's inability to produce the work in conformity with the old specifications; and whether, in the absence of any standard rate of wages for this class of work, which is foreign to the district, he will apply the Northamptonshire statement.

MR. HALDANE: Army boots of satisfactory manufacture have been obtained from Bristol for some years, and there is no reason to suppose that incompetent persons are employed in their manufacture, or that there is any infringement of the clause in the contract requiring the payment of the rate accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen in the district where the work is carried out. There is no power to require the payment of Northampton rates at Bristol, nor was the experiment tried last year, nor the subsequent reversion to the long-standing practice of admitting both hand and machine-closed boots, connected with the considerations suggested.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that whilst orders in the past have been going to Bristol this particular firm has not had an order before last year, that the War Department found it convenient to withdraw orders from the Bristol district, and that no current rate of wages is current in that district for Army work.

MR. HALDANE: We have given contracts to Bristol for some years past and we observe the rates current in the district. We put that in the contract, and after seeing that the particular firms who get the contract have not previously been struck off, we see that the conditions of the contract are observed.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Does the right hon. Gentleman say that this firm had no order for War Office work before last year?

MR. HALDANE: I have not the slightest idea, but if the hon. Gentleman gives me notice I will inquire.

Bounty-fed Sugar.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what revenue was produced in each of the years 1905–6, 1906–7, 1907–8, by the countervailing duties levied in India on bounty-fed sugar; whether these duties are levied for revenue purposes or for purposes of protection; whether he will inform the House why India, although not a party to the Brussels Sugar Convention, has retained these duties while a free trade Ministry has been in power; and whether he proposes to abolish those duties now that England has declared her intention not to penalise bounty-fed sugar.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The figures are:—1905–06, £122; 1906–07, £80; 1907–08, £34. The duties have been retained because the Government of India, though resolving not to adhere formally to the Brussels Convention, decided to conform to its practice while it continued in force. The Secretary of State is not in possession of their views as to the abolition of the existing duties after 1st September next, but will communicate with the Viceroy on the subject.

*MR. VILLIERS (Brighton): May I ask the hon. Gentleman whether it is not the fact that bounty-fed sugar is penalised in Great Britain by the new Convention, which requires that all sugared products entering the contracting States from this country should have a certificate stating that they are made of non-bounty-fed sugar?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think that that Question arises out of the one on the Paper.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Is it not clear that a countervailing duty favours the producers in British Colonies as well as producers in India?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. H. C. LEA: Would it not be to the advantage of the country in general and the Liberal Party in particular, if the Members of the Government would read the terms of the new Sugar Convention, as it forms very instructive reading for a free trade Government?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Dinizulu's Allowance.

MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been directed to Section 14 of the Act No. 37 of the Colony of Natal Acts, 1897, by which it is provided that the existing engagements entered into by Her Majesty with native chiefs in Zululand shall, from and after the annexation thereof, be undertaken and observed by the Governor of the Colony of Natal, who shall, in discharge thereof, pay yearly such sums of money as shall be required for the purpose of satisfying such engagements; whether the allowance made to Dinizulu comes within the provision quoted; and, if so, whether the British Government will at once call the attention of the Governor of Natal to the obligations imposed on him by the law of the Colony.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): Yes, I am aware of the section of the Zululand Annexation Act to which my hon. friend refers. The legal question whether the section in question covers the payment of an allowance to Dinizulu, who had not returned to Natal when the Act was passed, is by no means free from doubt, but the House is aware that His Majesty's Government have expressed the view that the Natal Government are under a clear obligation to pay Dinizulu's allowance, and they have no intention of receding from that view.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) asked whether the Natal Government had appointed a special Commission to try Dinizulu, and, if so, what was the nature of it?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, Sir; we have received——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. That subject does not arise out of the original Question.

French Customs Duty on British Imports.

MR. LLEWELYN WILLIAMS (Carmarthen District): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that in March last a syndicate of French iron and steel manufacturers petitioned M. Klotz, the President of the French Customs Commission, to increase the customs duty upon imported tinplates of British manufacture, and that counter-petitions were thereupon forwarded by the Chambre des Fabricants de Lampes et de Ferblanterie, and by the Syndicat des Fabricants de Conserves, that the imports of British tinplates into France show, during the last two years, a steady increase month by month, that the present customs duty on British tinplates in France is 13 francs per 100 kilos less 7 per cent., and that any increase thereupon would inevitably tend to reduce British export of tinplates; and whether, in view of the reasons which he gave for the maintenance of the Sugar Duties Convention, he will use his influence with the French Government to prevent the disturbance of the commercial relations of Great Britain and France in this regard.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. J. A. PEASE, Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The attention of my right hon. friend has been drawn to this matter; but he cannot admit the analogy between the situation created by the Sugar Convention and that referred to in the first part of the Question. My right hon. friend understands that the proceedings of the French Customs Commission will not be concluded for a considerable time. It would be premature to consider whether any, and if so, what action could be usefully taken until the Commission's labours are at an end. In the meanwhile His Majesty's Embassy at Paris will be instructed to take note of the points involved and the interests concerned.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): Can the hon. Gentleman say what means he has of enforcing any representations made by the British Ambassador?

MR. J. A. PEASE: The ordinary representations may be made by the Foreign Minister.

MR. JAMES HOPE: I asked what means he has of enforcing such representations.

MR. J. A. PEASE: I think that notice had better be given of that Question, or a Question addressed directly to the Foreign Secretary to-morrow.

Wholesale Tobacco Manufacturers' Licences.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will introduce a graduated scale in dealing with the licences of wholesale tobacco manufacturers instead of charging each the same figure, viz., £30, no matter the quantity they manufacture, especially in view of the fact that in the last seven years the number of wholesale manufacturers has been reduced by about ninety firms, thus much curtailing the nation's income from this licence.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The existing scale of licence-duties charged on tobacco manufacturers is graduated from £5 5s. to

£31 10s. by reference to the quantity of tobacco manufactured.

Inland Revenue Chemical Officers.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in July last, a petition was received from the chemical officers of Inland Revenue addressed to the Board of Inland Revenue; whether any reply has been sent to that petition; whether the prayer of the petition that these officers might be placed on terms of equality in regard to salaries and allowances with similar officers in the Customs has been granted; and, if no reply has been sent, what is the reason for ignoring a respectful petition; and if the prayer has not been granted, what is the reason for refusing it.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The matter is under consideration.

Women and Old-age Pensions.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate available showing how many of the 570,000 persons of seventy years of age and upwards who will become entitled to pensions are males and how many females, respectively.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is estimated that, of the 570,000 persons referred to, the males would number 247,000 and the females 323,000.

Reduction of State Liabilities.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will grant the Return respecting the reduction of State Liabilities now standing on the Order Paper of the House.†

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Full information as regards the reductions effected in the amount of the National Debt, distinguishing between dead-weight Debt and other capital liabilities, was given for each year from 1875–6 to 1907–8 in the special Return relating to the National Debt which was presented on 18th May (No. 146). That Return showed also the amount of money applied in each year to effect the reductions, and the sources from which the money was derived, particulars which are given in greater detail in the Annual Return of the National Debt (Command No. 4104). As the hon. Member is aware, the guaranteed loans and the other contingent liabilities of the State stand in an entirely different position from the liabilities which constitute the National Debt. I think that their inclusion in a Return of reduction of the National Debt would tend to the confusion of accounts, which are more valuable the simpler they can be made.

Case of Henry Thomas Storey.

MR. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of Henry Thomas Storey, a boy of fifteen, who was sentenced at the Central Criminal Court by Mr. Justice Grantham to eighteen months imprisonment with hard labour; and whether he will say what steps he has taken or intends to take in connection with the matter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): This case is now under my consideration.

Salford Docks—Accidents to Workmen.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of accidents to workmen employed on the Salford Docks by the Ship Canal Company for the years 1905, 1906, and 1907; and how many involved loss of limb and how many were fatal.

MR. GLADSTONE: The number of accidents notified by the Ship Canal Company to the factory inspector under

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† Return showing for each year from 1893–4 to 1907–8, both inclusive, the amount accruing towards the reduction, respectively, of (1) the Funded Debt, (2) the Unfunded Debt, (3) other Capital Liabilities, and (4) Guaranteed Loans and Contingent Liabilities, showing in each case whence such amount is derived, the amount of payment under each head for interest and management and whence each such payment is derived; with the total of all the payments representing the grand gross total of money provided in each year for payment of interest and capital of all kinds of debt, or the total charge falling on each year, whether in respect of interest or of repayment of capital, for the whole of the State Liabilities of the nature of Debt.

Section 104 of the Factory Act as occurring to men employed at the Salford Docks was: In 1905, 306; in 1906, 394; in 1907, 345. Seven were fatal in 1905, five in 1906, and four in 1907. None involved loss of limb at the time of the notification of the accident; the Factory Department has no information as to whether any resulted in amputation subsequently.

MR. CLYNES: In view of the number of these accidents, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman if the question of accidents in docks and similar places will come within the scope of the inquiry promised by the right hon. Gentleman?

MR. GLADSTONE: Yes, certainly.

Whipping Sentences.

MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with reference to the case of the boy Storey, sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment at the Central Criminal Court, he will consider the propriety of so amending the Law as to restore the punishment of whipping, which the learned Judge considered to be that suitable to the offence, and in consequence of the practical abolition of which by recent legislation the sentence under notice was awarded.

MR. GLADSTONE: The question of legislation will be considered when an opportunity occurs, but at present I do not see my way to introducing a Bill on the subject.

Tarbert Pier.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the pier at Tarbert, Loch Fyne, has now been made a free pier; whether it was recently let by his Department to Mr. Campbell, of Stonefield, the superior of the land there, and, if so, at what rental; whether Mr. Campbell sublet it at a profit, and, if so, at what rental; whether it was part of the agreement that the lessee, Mr. Campbell, should maintain the pier and harbour in efficient condition, and, if so, was this part of the bargain fulfilled to the satisfaction of his Department; and whether the Board of Trade is again negotiating for the leasing of the pier, and, if so, will he give a preference to the parish council, or some other local authority who express willingness to enter into a contract regarding it.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The pier does not belong to the Board of Trade, and no communication has reached me from any quarter about it. I will, however, cause inquiries to be made, and I will communicate further with my hon. friend on the subject in due course.

Central London District Schools.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board why the Report of the Local Government inquiry of 1904 in the matter of the central London districts schools has not been published.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.): It is not usual to publish Reports of this kind. They are made for the information of the Local Government Board and are confidential documents.

Indoor Pauperism in the North.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state the number of inmates at the end of last month in the workhouses at Gateshead, Shields, and Sunderland, respectively; the number of inmates each workhouse is intended to accommodate; and the death-rate per 1,000 of such workhouses for the month of May.

MR. MASTERMAN: The number of inmates of the workhouses mentioned was at the end of May as follows: Gateshead, 1,044; South Shields, 1,156; and Sunderland, 1,395. The number each of these workhouses is intended to accommodate is: Gateshead, 1,143; South Shields, 930; and Sunderland, 1,108. The death-rate per 1,000 at the end of May in these workhouses was: Gateshead, 17·2; South Shields, 25; Sunderland, 26·5. I may add that steps have been taken, or are being taken, by the guardians of each of these unions to extend the accommodation for the indoor poor, so as to relieve the pressure on their workhouses.

Registrar-General's Supplementary Report.

MR. CHARLES ROBERTS (Lincoln): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state when there will be issued Part II. of the Supplement to the Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, the publication of which, according to a Parliamentary Answer of 30th July, 1907, was anticipated towards the close of last year.

MR. MASTERMAN: The Registrar-General has expressed his regret at the delay which, owing to unforeseen circumstances, has taken place in the issue of Part II. of the Supplement to his Sixty-Fifth Annual Report. I understand, however, that it is now practically finished, and is in the hands of the printers. The Registrar-General sees no reason why it should not be issued by the end of next month.

Teachers' Register.

MR. BUTCHER (Cambridge University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Government proposes to give any compensation to those teachers who have expended time and money in qualifying for Column B. of the Teachers' Register and were placed upon it before its abolition.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): As the lines of the new register for teachers are not yet determined, it would be premature for me to offer any opinion as to the proper course to adopt, in whatever respect, as regards teachers who have been registered on the register which is already in existence, and which is not, I think, yet abolished.

MR. BUTCHER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the funds arising from payments made for admission to the Teachers' Register were wholly expended on the maintenance of the Register; if not, in whose hands are these funds, and how is it proposed to deal with them.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The balance, amounting to £2,971, was handed over by the late Council to the Board of Education. It would be premature to determine its further application until the new council has been constituted.

MR. BUTCHER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education how the Board proposes to deal with the schools whose schemes require that the head master or assistant masters, or any of these, should have been placed on the Register.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The requirement referred to has already been removed from eleven schemes, and is in process of being removed from sixty-seven others. Only forty-six schemes remain in which the requirement exists, and in these it can easily be removed on application from the governors. Meanwhile, it is improbable that any inconvenience will be occasioned, especially as the point only arises on the change of the headmaster or the headmistress of the school.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University) was understood to ask how the removal of this requirement was consistent with the previous declarations of the Department?

MR. RUNCIMAN said he could only state the fact that the modification had been allowed.

Teachers' Registration Council.

MR. BUTCHER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he can inform the House whether there is any immediate prospect of the Teachers' Registration Council being constituted; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay, seeing that secondary and elementary teachers are agreed upon the subject.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state the reasons for the delay in the constitution of a Registration Council under The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): May I ask the President of the Board of Education whether having regard to the fact that the representatives of elementary and secondary education are agreed as to the constitution of a Registration Council, he will state definitely what educational interests have not yet signified their assent to the formation of a Council in accordance with the terms of agreement submitted to the Board.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have nothing at present to add to the answer I gave on this point on 1st June last, except to say that the communication there referred to has not yet reached the Board of Education, and that the Board are, therefore, not yet in a position to take the requisite steps, as then explained, towards deciding the questions relating to the representative nature of the council as proposed by the deputation of certain educational bodies. Even if, as suggested in the Question, the secondary and elementary teachers are agreed upon the subject, the Board have to bear in mind that the Council is required by the Act to be representative of the teaching profession, and not merely of teachers in elementary and in secondary schools. The representatives of the educational associations referred to were not agreed, on being asked the question, as to the particular methods by which the interests of teachers other than those in elementary schools and in secondary schools should properly be safeguarded in the constitution of the new Teachers' Registration Council. The Board are anxious to avoid any possible delay and are hoping to receive in a few days the communications from the representatives which the deputation promised would shortly be submitted.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what educational interests have not yet agreed to the constitution of the proposed Council? Have not the National Union of Teachers and the various educational associations representing headmasters of secondary schools, headmistresses, and assistant masters and mistresses, and the heads of private schools already agreed to the constitution of this council?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I pointed out in my reply that certain questions which were addressed to the deputation which waited on the Board in reference to the matter have not yet been answered, and these questions refer to teachers who do not come into the categories mentioned by the hon. Gentleman.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS: Is the formation of this council to be delayed until every teacher of swimming, or dancing, or music has agreed to its constitution?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I do not know what justification the hon. Gentleman has for sneering at teachers who are not secondary or elementary teachers in the technical sense of the word. It is perfectly obvious that the interests of the teachers engaged in technical education will have to be considered.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state what were the terms of engagement of the registrar and other officers of the Registration Council under the Order in Council of March, 1902; and whether any, and what, provision is being made for these officials who, after several years service, are thrown out of employment in consequence of the dissolution of the Registration Council on 31st March, 1908.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The agreement between the Teachers' Registration Council and the registrar provided, *inter alia*, that the engagement should be terminable by either party on giving six calendar months notice in writing. The agreements with the remainder of the staff of the council provided for three months' notice. The officers of the council were not in the service of the Board, and I cannot, therefore, admit that any responsibility, direct or indirect, rests upon the Board of finding them further employment. The Board have, however, been able to offer two of the clerks some temporary employment in the office, and it is possible that they may be able to utilise the services of another of the council's officers from time to time in inspectorial work.

Education Code.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education when he proposes to lay upon the

Table of the House the Code and the Training College Regulations for 1908.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I hope to lay the Code during the course of next week, but I am unable at present to fix a date for the publication of the Training College Regulations.

Redenham Village Green.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been drawn to the recent partial enclosure of the village green at Redenham, near Andover, Hants; whether his Department have any information as to the persons making the enclosure, or have given any sanction for the same; and what action, if any, it is proposed to take to protect public rights in this open space.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somerset, E.): The Board have no information on this subject. If my hon. friend will be good enough to supply further particulars inquiry will be made without delay. I may refer my hon. friend to the powers conferred upon district councils by Section 26 (2) of the Local Government Act, 1894, with regard to the maintenance of rights of common in cases where the extinction of such rights would be prejudicial to the inhabitants of the district concerned.

MR. JOHN WARD: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire of the rural district council at Andover for any information they may have on the subject?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I must ask the hon. Member for some facts before I can undertake to inquire.

The Vatersay Evictions.

SIR J. DEWAR (Inverness): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the conditions in which the cottar population of Barra and Mingulay are living; is he aware that the public health authorities of the county have reported that the houses of the people are insanitary and unhealthy and give rise to disease, but that they cannot take proceedings under the Public Health Acts because the result would be to render the people homeless altogether; is he aware that the parish council of Barra has petitioned the proprietress, who owns the whole land in the neighbourhood, to let land for small holdings, and that a committee of the County Council of Inverness, after an exhaustive inquiry, reported that land is available and is urgently required and would be highly beneficial, but that the parish council has been unable to obtain it on reasonable terms; and whether he will consider the advisability of introducing special legislation to remedy this state of matters.

I beg also to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that about fifty families from Barra and Mingulay, having failed to obtain land either by direct negotiation or through the parish council, have gone to the adjacent Island of Vatersay, where they have erected huts and planted some acres of potatoes without the consent of the proprietress; is he aware that the proprietress made application to the Court for interdict against ten of the men, and after sundry procedure they were, on 2nd June, sentenced to two months imprisonment; is he aware that, after inquiry into the whole circumstances of the social conditions of these islands, the Sheriff of the county reported that the men now in prison are respectable, intelligent, and reasonable, that there is strong local sympathy with them on the ground that the management of the estate has not fully appreciated the duty of a landowner, and that long indifference to their necessities has gone far to drive these men to exasperation; whether he is aware that if these men are detained in prison for two months they will lose the whole fishing season, and so be deprived of the only means of livelihood which they have for themselves and their families; and whether, in these special circumstances, he will consider the expediency of remitting part of their sentence.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire): At the same time I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been called to the case of the ten cottars of Vatersay who have been sentenced to imprisonment for not obeying the order of the Court, whose plea was to the effect that their disobedience was not due to any disrespect of the authority of the Court but to the difficult circumstances in which they were placed; whether he is aware that in the view of these men to obey the Court would mean starvation or being driven from their country; whether the Sheriff of Inverness, Elgin, and Nairn has reported officially to the Secretary for Scotland upon the circumstances out of which these proceedings arose, that in his opinion the position of matters is most unfortunate, and that the men appeared to him respectable, reasonable, and intelligent; whether the attempts made by the local authorities under the existing law to obtain land for these men have been defeated; whether the alteration in the law provided in the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill would have met this case, among many others; and whether he will consider the necessity of removing the impediments to that measure passing into law at the earliest possible date.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies, may I ask whether he is aware that the proprietress offered to sell to the Congested Districts Board the only land in Barra in her possession not already occupied by small holders, and whether the Sheriff recommended that this course should be adopted by the Government?

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): I have asked the public health authorities for information to enable me to reply to the first part of the Question of the hon. Member for Inverness; in regard to the remainder and to the two other Questions I have to reply as follows:—Generally, the facts are as stated and were before the Court which passed sentence. In view of the practice in such cases, and after full consideration of all the circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that it is not my duty to advise the Crown in this case to remit any portion of the sentence awarded. So far as legislation is concerned, it is unfortunately the case, as the Prime Minister stated on Monday last, that the proposals of the Government to which my hon. friend refers have been rejected in another place, and the Government are not in a position to carry the matter further this session.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that in the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill referred to no provision was included for allotments for agricultural labourers' and fishermen's cottages, and whether, in view of the fact that in the Crofters Bill now before the House such provision is made, he will give facilities for passing that measure?

Mr. SINCLAIR: My hon. friend has already received an Answer from the Prime Minister on this subject, which cannot, of course, be added to by anybody in the position I hold.

Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): Did not the Sheriff referred to state that the right solution of the question was for the Congested Districts Board to purchase a sufficient amount of property to provide allotments for those who desired them, and is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to carry out that suggestion?

Mr. SINCLAIR: The Sheriff's report forms part of the Papers that have been issued, and therefore the information the hon. Gentleman seeks is already accessible.

Mr. COCHRANE: But are the statements attributed to the Sheriff in the Question accurately set out?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I understand they are as stated.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to carry out the suggestions of the Sheriff or not?

Mr. SINCLAIR: The hon. and gallant Gentleman will find all the facts, as well as the position of the Government, which they still hold in this matter, set out in the Parliamentary Paper.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.): Is it not the fact that the last portion of land purchased on the Vatersay Peninsula by the Congested Districts Board cost 120 years purchase?

MR. SINCLAIR: I cannot commit myself to a rapid calculation of that kind.

SIR J. DEWAR: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the last portion of my Question, and introduce special legislation dealing with this case, as has been done in the case of Lord Clanricarde's estate in Ireland?

MR. SINCLAIR: My reference to legislation was intended to cover my reply on that point.

Scottish Bankruptcy Laws.

MR. CLELAND (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the state of the bankruptcy laws of Scotland, he will appoint a Departmental Committee to examine and report upon the subject generally, with a view to their simplification and improvement.

MR. SINCLAIR: There does seem to the Government to be a case for the appointment of such a Committee, and I intend presently to take steps in that direction.

Irish Teaching in Irish Schools.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the rules and regulations of the Commissioners of National Education for 1907–1908 contain provisions that in schools in which the bilingual programme is adopted Irish should be mainly the medium of instruction for the junior standards (I. to III.) and English mainly for the higher, and the merit of the teaching is judged by the proficiency both in Irish and English, the former being the main factor in the case of the junior standards, and the latter in the case of the higher; and, as such provisions strike at the existence of Irish as a vernacular language, will he advise the Commissioners of National Education not to include such provisions in their rules for 1908–1909, but allow Irish to be the vehicle of instruction in all the standards in the schools in the Irish-speaking districts, Engish to be taught efficiently and thoroughly as a subject of instruction.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange; for Mr. BIRRELL): The provisions of the Commissioners' regulations are as stated in the Question. The Commissioners inform me that they are not aware that these provisions have a detrimental effect on Irish as a vernacular language. They adopted such provisions with the object of securing thorough and effective instruction in both Irish and English. As a rule Irish is the mother-tongue of the majority of the pupils in bilingual schools, and consequently it is much easier and more effective to convey instruction to the junior pupils through the medium of Irish, but when pupils have advanced to the senior standards, it becomes necessary to give more attention to the use of English in their instruction, in order that they may acquire a sound knowledge of both languages.

Bilingual Programme in Irish National Schools.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in how many National schools in Ireland has the bilingual programme been in operation during the school year which began on 1st July, 1906.

MR. CHERRY: During the school year which began on 1st July, 1906, the bilingual programme was in operation, with the sanction of the Commissioners, in thirty-six National schools.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in how many National Schools in Ireland has Irish been taught to children in the third and higher standards since the commencement of the school year in July last.

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners inform me that complete Returns are not yet available showing the number of National schools in which Irish has been taught in the third and higher standards since the commencement of the current school year, but the managers of 2,173 schools have notified their intention of presenting pupils in Irish in the current year under the regulations which provide for the payment of extra fees in the third and higher standards.

Ennis Cattle-driving Trial.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the remarks of Judge Bodkin, K.C., in reference to a case of cattle-driving which came before him at Ennis on Wednesday last; whether £50 compensation was awarded for malicious injury; who will pay this compensation; and whether the persons who removed the cattle have been discovered.

MR. CHERRY: I have no information as to the remarks of the County Court Judge in this case beyond that which may be gathered from the newspaper reports. The amount of compensation awarded in the case was £2, not £50, and this will be levied upon the ratepayers of the rural district of Ennis. The cattle-drivers were not discovered.

Distribution of Untenanted Lands.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether a tenant who has voluntarily sold his farm by public auction is qualified to receive another farm upon an estate purchased by the Estates Commissioners for distribution to evicted tenants.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that in their opinion a person who had voluntarily sold his farm would not on that account be ineligible to receive a parcel of untenanted land upon property purchased by the Commissioners, if in the exercise of their discretion they should think fit to give it to him. But they say that they probably would not do so.

Claremorris District Council Elections.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the proceedings of the Claremorris District Council on 9th June, when certain elections were proceeded with in spite of the absence of a number of members, who were delayed in consequence of a breakdown on the railway; whether the directors of the Midland Railway and the Board of Trade have been requested to hold an inquiry into the causes of the derangement of the railway service and the tampering with the telegraph and telephone wires; and what steps the Local Government Board intend to take in reference to the elections.

MR. CHERRY: The attention of the Local Government Board has been called by certain members of the district council to the fact stated in the Question. The delay to the mail train at Ballyhaunis is said to have been caused by the malicious cutting off of all telegraphic and telephonic communication between that place and Claremorris. I understand that the railway company have requested the Post Office authorities to have the matter investigated. The Local Government Board have no power to take any action in the case, seeing that the meeting of the district council was held at the proper hour, and that a quorum was present.

Mullingar Labourers' Cottages.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the action of the Mullingar Rural District Council in endeavouring to eject three occupants of labourers' cottages at Johnstown, Rathowen, because they were in the employment of Mr. Harry Bond, J.P., who is boycotted and under police protection; whether he is aware that the minutes of the council record the fact that this action was taken in consequence of a letter received from the Rathowen branch of the United Irish League; and what action he proposes to take in the matter.

MR. CHERRY: The Local Government Board are aware that at Mullingar Quarter Sessions on 10th June the rural district council took proceedings to recover possession of three labourers' cottages, the occupants of which are in the employment of Mr. Bond. The statement in the Question as to the minutes of the council is correct. The Local Government Board have no power to interfere with the eviction of labourers from cottages built under the Labourers Acts. The Board understand, however, from the newspaper reports, that the County Court Judge decided either to dismiss the cases or to give decrees with a stay of execution for eleven months, whichever the defendants should choose; and the cases are stated to have been adjourned in order that the defendants might consider these alternatives.

Proclamation of Sligo and Westmeath.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the nature of the circumstances which have rendered necessary the proclamation of the Counties of Sligo and Westmeath, the number of police already employed in those counties, and the additional number it is proposed to employ; and who will pay the increased cost entailed by the additional establishment.

MR. CHERRY: The proclamation of the Counties of Sligo and Westmeath, with the object of appointing additional police, became necessary in consequence of the state of disturbance of those counties, arising mainly from the agitation against the grazing system. The number of police at present employed is: In Sligo, 206; and in Westmeath, 230. The established force is: In Sligo, 206; and in Westmeath, 190; but in the latter county a number of men detached from other counties have been temporarily serving. It is proposed, under the powers of the proclamations, to increase the Sligo force by 30 men, and the Westmeath force by 45 men, making the totals 236 and 235, respectively. One moiety of the cost of this increase will fall upon the counties, and the other moiety will be borne by the Votes.

Dublin Castle Mail Bags.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the Report of the Committee of Public Accounts in reference to the charge of £358, which appears on the Estimates for the collection and delivery of mail bags between the General Post Office, Dublin, and the Castle or the Phœnix Park lodges; and whether, having regard to the fact that it is the duty of the Post Office to deliver mails without charge, he will make arrangements for relieving the Estimates of this expense.

MR. CHERRY: The Committee of Public Accounts have brought the matter in question to the notice of the Treasury, and the Committee's representations will receive due attention. Before deciding, however, upon the action to be taken, it will be necessary to await the publication of the evidence upon which the Committee have based their conclusions.

Antrim National Schools.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state who first proposed the amalgamation of Dunadry, Islandbawn, and Muckamore National schools, in the County of Antrim, and with whom was the original correspondence on the subject carried on; whether he is aware that the manager of Muckamore school has, without consultation with the managers of Dunadry or Islandbawn schools and without their approval, selected a site for the new school which, in their opinion, is not the most suitable or convenient site that might have been acquired; why did the Commissioners not insist that in all negotiations and conferences the managers of all three schools should be represented; and whether he will request the Commissioners to appoint the managers of the three schools in question joint managers of the new school.

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the amalgamation of the schools in question was first proposed by one of their inspectors in connection with an application by the manager of Islandbawn national school for a building grant for a new school-house. The Commissioners declined to grant that application as they were of opinion that the Islandbawn school and the two other schools referred to should be superseded by a new school in a central position. The manager of Muckamore school has since applied for a grant towards the building of such a central school, and has selected a site, of which the Commissioners approve as at present advised. The manager of the Islandbawn school has, however, represented to the Commissioners that neither he nor the manager of Dunadry school was consulted as to the selection of the site, and the Commissioners have therefore directed their chief inspector to furnish a special report on the matter, after consulting with all the persons interested. The Commissioners will postpone their decision until they have received the chief inspector's report.

Afforestry in Ireland.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has received representations urging the necessity of establishing a State Department of Forestry in Ireland; and whether he can hold out any prospect of such an organisation being set up and financed in the near future.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: My right hon. friend has nothing to add to the replies given by the Chief Secretary and by myself on the 15th instant to similar Questions put by the hon. Member for West Waterford.

PROCEDURE OF THE HOUSE.

Notices of Motion stood on the Paper in the names of Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) for the presentation of a Bill "to provide for the allocation of time for the Committee and Report stages and Third Readings of certain Bills," and of Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) for the presentation of a Bill "to provide that certain periods of time shall be allotted to the remaining stages of the Old-Age Pensions Bill."

*MR. SPEAKER: In regard to the two Notices of Motion in the names of the hon. Member for Lambeth and the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone, I have to point out that the progress of Bills in this House is the subject-matter of the common law of this House, and is dealt with by Standing Order or by Resolution. It cannot be dealt with by Bill. Therefore, the Bills of which the hon. Members have given notice are out of order, and for that reason I do not call upon them.

LORD R. CECIL asked whether in any circumstances it was competent for an hon. Member to present a Bill dealing with the procedure of the House—for instance, a Bill providing that a Bill should be passed by a single Resolution of the House? It might well be that so great a change would be very improperly dealt with by Resolution, and that the full formalities of the House should be granted in such a case, and it might be desirable that the other House should have an opportunity of expressing its opinion.

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not know whether there may be introduced at some distant date some such Bill as the noble Lord refers to, but with regard to that, as I have not seen it, I should not like to pronounce upon it. But the general rule is this, that this House should decline altogether to permit the Crown or the House of Lords to come into consultation, or have anything whatever to say with regard to the regulation of its own procedure. I may say that this is not the first time that the doctrine has been laid down, for I find my predecessor laid it down in 1897, and I myself, when I occupied the chair below me, gave a ruling to exactly the same effect in 1898.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

SIR WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B.: Mr. Solicitor-General for Scotland; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Children Bill): the Lord Advocate.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

BANKS (UNCLAIMED BALANCES).

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.) in asking leave to introduce the Banks

(Unclaimed Balances) Bill, said the object of the Bill was to bring into the possession and the control of the State a vast amount of wealth which was at present lying dormant, and in most cases entirely unproductive, in the vaults and strong rooms of various banking institutions of the United Kingdom. The Bill provided that on a certain date, which was fixed at 15th January next, every corporation or person carrying on the business of a banker should make a return in the prescribed form of all moneys remaining in their possession which had lain dormant for a period of six years and upwards, or of all securities in the shape of scrip, shares, mortgages, plate, jewellery, or other valuables which had lain in their possession for a similar period, the property of persons who during that period had in no way operated in their accounts, and finally that they should account to the State for all old bank notes, and other obligations which there was reason, by the effluxion of time, to assume had been lost or become obsolete. The theory of the Bill was that banking being one of the oldest institutions in this country, it had come about that by death, removals abroad, the extinction of families, and the carelessness of testators in not disclosing the details of their banking accounts, vast sums and securities had become accumulated in the possession of various banks. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House as the result of some inquiries a few years ago that he was led to believe that those sums and securities did not exceed £600,000; but even if that was so he thought there was some justification for this Bill on the ground that we now had a department of the Public Trustee, and that official was essentially the gentleman who should hold these securities. The banks had been in the habit for ages past of writing off every six years all these dormant balances. There was a more or less obsolete legal decision which entitled them to do so, but of necessity the bankers themselves could not know anything about the total values of the securities lying dormant in their strong rooms. There were in the possession of all the old private banks, and most of the new joint stock banks, sealed boxes containing scrip and deeds of title upon which dividends were not collected. There was over £1,000,000 to-day in the shape of unpaid dividends in the possession of the joint stock banks, which represented an enormous total of capital lying sleeping in the vaults of the banks. He knew of one joint stock bank in the City of London which until a few years ago had a customer in the shape of an eccentric old lady who had £28,000 standing to her credit. Once at least in every year she would drive up to the bank, ask for the manager, draw a cheque for the entire sum, and having counted the notes and checked the interest, she would then pay it in again and disappear for another twelve months. That went on for many years, but in the last seven years they had seen nothing of the old lady, and the £28,000 with accumulated interest was lying in the name of the bank, which he could give if desired to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Was there a doubt that that old lady had ceased to exist? It was a comical thing in one aspect, but what about the poor dependents of the old lady who were deprived of participation in that money? A personal friend of his, one of those wealthy men who were always borne down by the apprehension of some impending catastrophe, was in the habit of leaving all his wealth on deposit in various banks. A few years ago he was killed in a railway accident, and at this moment his family were living in absolute want, because they were utterly unable to ascertain where the money was at present lodged in the various banks of the United Kingdom. They had gone from bank to bank, and the answer was always that they could give no information upon such subjects. A friend of his, an officer who lost his life in South Africa, within a week of his death wrote to his relatives that he had £6,000 lying in a bank which would be available for his family if anything befell him. He died, and his family were to-day unable to say where any portion of that £6,000 was. He thought that that was an evil well worthy of consideration. Then there was the question of plate and jewels, and he made himself responsible for the statement that there was one private bank in London which alone admittedly had over £2,000,000 worth of dormant securities. It was common knowledge that nearly all the grand buildings which served as the head offices of the great banks had been erected at the expense of those dormant funds, and he submitted that there was here a problem well worthy of consideration. He was not to be suspected of being unduly enamoured of the present occupant of the office of Public Trustee, but the office itself was invaluable, and it seemed to him to be their duty to make that office justify its existence. There was in the possession of the banks to-day a sum to be measured, not by thousands, but by millions. If the bankers had not the right to break open the seals of the boxes containing deeds and titles and scrip on which interest was not collected, the State could do so, and he asked the House to concur in the First Reading of the Bill on the understanding that it might be referred to a Select Committee or that any other course might be adopted which might seem fit. The second clause of the Bill provided that after a given date the whole of these securities should be handed over to the Department of the Public Trustee, and there were provisions for penalties, and one for annual Returns every January on similar lines. If the House would permit him to introduce the Bill, he thought, without any exaggeration, that the result would be a surprise to the country and a veritable Godsend to the Exchequer.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the disclosure and handing over by Bankers to the Department of the Public Trustee of the amount of dormant balances and securities in their possession and of unpresented old banknotes issued by them."—(*Mr. Bottomley.*)

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth) said he was taken rather by surprise at the short notice of a Bill of this character, which created a novelty in their commercial experience, and was based upon assumptions which were not proved, and upon anonymous cases which seemed to have happened to personal friends of the mover, one being an old lady. The main assumption upon which the hon. Member had moved the Bill was that at the end of every six years bankers were in the habit of writing off unclaimed balances. That was not so, and he was astonished that with the personal experience of the law which the hon. Member possessed—and he was very astute in these matters—he had not come across that principle of the law which would have taught him that a banker's balance was not, like an ordinary debt, extinguished by statutory limitation at the end of six years. He happened to know, as a banker himself, that unclaimed balances were not transferable, and were not appropriated by bankers to their own purposes at all. A banker held himself as a trustee of all moneys deposited with him by customers, and whether within six years or not, the bankers in London most certainly, without exception, would hold themselves responsible to their customers for every farthing deposited with them. Furthermore, dormant accounts were not the accounts by which bankers lived; they preferred living on active accounts, and it was to the interest of bankers to find out whether a customer was dead or living and that the proper people came into possession of that which might be placed in their hands. He was at a loss to know on what principle money which belonged to A. and was placed in the hands of B. by A. could be taken away from B. by a third person without his consent and subjected to a charge which under the Trustees Act was known to be imposed upon all funds deposited with the Public Trustee. It was an interference with commercial finance which was without precedent, and he wondered whether the hon. Member who moved the Bill would like an Act to be passed to provide that all the profits of the businesses in which he had been engaged should be handed to the Public Trustee; and he wondered how the commercial world would face a proposition that everything in the hands of the great industrial companies that happened to have been left by some confiding customer for safe custody while he went abroad should also be exploited by the State. He certainly asked the House to pause before it gave leave even to introduce a Bill based upon no inquiry but merely upon assertions which had no authority and anonymous cases for which they had only the hon.

Member's own memory, and which he undertook to say would, if submitted to examination in Committee, be found to be altogether groundless.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 193; Noes, 54. (Division List No. 119.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Black, Arthur W.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Fardell, Sir T. George
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hodge, John
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Marnham, F. J.
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Tomkinson, James
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)

Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Willams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Bottomley and Mr. John Ward.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex F.
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bryce, J. Annan
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Jardine, Sir J.
Keswick, William
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Micklem, Nathaniel
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Napier, T. B.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Waring, Walter
Whitbread, Howard
Williamson, A.

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Henry Kimber and Mr. Rees.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bottomley, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Hart-Davies, Mr. Hugh Lea, Mr. Sloan, Mr. Llewelyn Williams, Mr. Jowett, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Walsh, Mr. Bertram Straus, Mr. Grayson, and Mr. Bowerman.

BANKS (UNCLAIMED BALANCES) BILL.

"To provide for the disclosure and handing over by Bankers to the Department of the Public Trustee of the amount of dormant balances and securities in their possession and of unpresented old bank-notes issued by them," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 266.]

WILD BIRDS.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) in asking leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1880 to 1904, said that when hon. Members were acquainted with the provisions of the Bill, he was sure they would, on whichever side of the House they sat, support it. He could not better explain his reason for bringing in the Bill, which was very short, than by reading two or three sentences from an article in the London *Daily Telegraph* of a few days ago, reviewing a book by Mr. W. H. Hudson, the prominent naturalist. The writer said—

> "It will surely come as a surprise to Englishmen and Englishwomen to learn, on the unimpeachable authority of a well-known naturalist of great literary distinction, that the small birds which are driven down into Cornwall at winter time by stress of weather, are massacred there by the thousand in sheer wantonness, not merely by boys, but by grown up people."

This was the method of wholesale slaughter, as described by Mr. Hudson—

> "Each person buys a handful of small fish-hooks, manufactured for the purpose by a tradesman in the town. Ten to twenty baited hooks are fastened with short threads to a string, 2 or 3 feet long, called a "teagle," and placed on a strip of ground from which the snow has been cleared. To these strips of mould or turf the birds fly, and seize the hooks, and so blind to danger are they made by hunger that they are not deterred by the frantic struggles of those already hooked. Many birds succeed in freeing themselves by breaking the thread in their struggles, but always with that bit of barbed bent wire in their mouths or stomachs, which must eventually cause their death."

Mr. Hudson went on to say—

> "One man, the most enthusiastic bird-catcher with the teagle in the place, after removing the hook from the mouth or gullet of the bird he does not want, takes the two little mandibles between his thumbs and forefingers, and wrenches the face open, then tosses the bird up to fly away to a little distance, soon to drop down and perish in agony. Small birds that are not wanted, he says, will sometimes return after being liberated, and get caught again; those he liberates will trouble him no more."

The Bill consisted of only two clauses. The first clause said that—

> "Any person who shall take or attempt to take a wild bird by means of a hook or other similar instrument shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable on summary conviction to a

penalty not exceeding 40s., and for the second or subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding £5."

The second clause was—

> "Every offence under this Act may be prosecuted under Section 5 of the Wild Birds Protection Act, 1880."

He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1880 to 1904,"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir Frederick Banbury, Marquess of Hamilton, Lord Edmund Talbot, and Colonel Lockwood.

WILD BIRDS BILL.

"To amend the Wild Birds Protection Acts, 1880 to 1904," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 267.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL) (ALLOCATION OF TIME).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs), in moving the Motion which stood on the Paper relating to the Business of the House and the allocation of the time to be given in Committee to the Old-Age Pensions Bill, said that no one who had taken the trouble of perusing the list of Amendments put down last night would think it necessary to justify the Resolution he now moved. After eleven o'clock last night there were 178 Amendments put down, and he had no doubt that by Monday morning that number would be more than doubled. He knew perfectly well that a great number of these Amendments were duplicates, but making every allowance for duplicates and those which would be ruled out of order he did not doubt that there would be 200 Amendments which could be and would be moved unless some rule of the kind set out in his Resolution were imposed. He had had some experience of moving Amendments to Bills, and he had no hesitation in saying that with the assistance of his right hon. friends the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade, and the First Commissioner of Works, sitting in some corner seat below the gangway, he could draft Amendments to the Bill the discussion of which without anything in the nature of obstruction would occupy the Committee stage till the adjournment for the holidays. Amendments could also be moved on the Budget Bill which would make it impossible to get it through before they separated for the holidays. The only part he had taken in discussions on Closure Resolutions was that of opposing them. He had looked up the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition when moving similar Motions. He found in them a great many things in which he heartily concurred. Probably the right hon. Gentleman might say that it had taken him six years to find that out, although he did not think that that was so. He had taken the precaution to look up what he had said when in opposition and found that he stated that he did not think opposition to Motions of this kind could be considered apart from the circumstances and character of the Bill itself. He and his friends had opposed Motions of this kind, but it was on the ground that the Bills in respect of which they had been moved were Bills on which the opinion of the country had not been taken. He did not wish to enter into any controversial matter. All he would say was that he had read with considerable interest the speech made by the Leader of the Opposition when he moved the Closure on the Education Bill of 1902. He himself said in the last Parliament, and he was still of the same opinion, that, apart from the question of the merits of that Bill, and quite apart from the question as to whether it should have been introduced or not, he always thought that in that case the Closure was absolutely justifiable. He would commend anyone who wanted to form an opinion on a Resolution of this kind to read the speech of the Leader of the Opposition on that occasion. It was an extremely important speech from the point of view of those who were interested in the procedure of this House, and in the possibility of carrying Bills through under ordinary conditions. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out—and he thought everyone would agree with him—that it was quite impossible to carry through any first-class measure under the old conditions. Hon. Members could move innumerable Amendments, absolutely relevant, and quite in order—any hon. Member of experience could do it—and discuss them without appearing to obstruct the passage of the Bill, but with the result that the whole work of the session would be practically destroyed. That was the proposition laid down by the Leader of the Opposition. He did not challenge it at the time because he quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman; and he was still of the same opinion. The right hon. Gentleman on the Licensing Bill, in 1904, said—and he could not do better than quote his words—

> "I think that a Government which allowed itself to be beaten by time must really be unworthy of the responsibility which rests upon it."

He thought that that was a very inadequate reason for guillotining a first-class measure; but both parties had now moved these Resolutions: they had become part and parcel of the inevitable procedure of the House. He never thought them a real remedy for congested business, but as long as the House of Commons insisted on legislation on all kinds of things, great and small, local as well as Imperial—things which the House of Commons was quite incompetent to deal with from the point of view of local knowledge and which would be very much better dealt with by assemblies of a different character—as long as the House of Commons retained in its hands what no other Legislature in the whole world had in fact retained in its hands, the inevitable result must be Resolutions of this character which no one could possibly defend except on the ground of absolute necessity. He agreed on all grounds with a very important remark of the Leader of the Opposition, who laid it down that in his judgment the procedure of this House was of such a character as to incapacitate it for dealing with first-class measures unless they introduced some kind of inhibitory Resolution and arbitrarily terminated the debate. Until the House of Commons faced this greater and wider problem it would be driven inevitably to Resolutions of this kind—he did not care what party was in power (and he was not quite sure that the party to which he belonged did not introduce the first) and to adopt those summary methods to bring the Committee stage to some sort of termination. He came now to the point which had been raised—that the Government were setting up a new precedent here. It was said that instead of waiting until they got into Committee and finding out how they got along and then introducing their Resolution, the Government preferred to map out the time in Committee in advance and to move a Resolution before they went into Committee. He thought that that was a great improvement. He had always taken that view, and for the very obvious reason that unless they did so the result would be that the time available would be exhausted in discussions, not on the first clause, but on the first two or three lines. Then the Government said they could not waste more time on the question, and ruthlessly closured perhaps fifteen or twenty clauses. He thought it was better that the Government should allocate a certain time to the discussion of particular portions than adopt such an attitude as that. From the objections raised on Second Reading every Government must know before it approached the Committee stage of a Bill the general nature of the criticisms directed against it, and it was much better to allocate the time of the House in the way proposed. It provided much more time for the discussion if the criticisms were arranged and tabulated in such a way as to provide time for their consideration. Before sitting down he thought he would be able to show that the Government had so mapped out and allocated the time that the House would be able to discuss exhaustively every criticism of any real character. He now came to the Motion that had been placed upon the Paper, and he would indicate to the House why they had mapped out the time of the House in this fashion. There were three great criticisms of the Bill itself that he assumed would be discussed. First, there was the criticism that the scheme was non-contributory. He assumed that that would be discussed very fully because of the expression of the House given on the Second Reading, on the Motion of the hon. Member for Preston. Nobody challenged the principle of old-age pensions, and he confined himself to that for the purpose of drawing distinctions. All the Bills that had been closured in other times, whether by the right hon. Gentleman opposite or his predecessors in office, were Bills dealing with violently controversial questions, such as the Home Rule Bill, the Licensing Bill, and the Evicted Tenants Bill. Two Bills were so controversial that they were thrown out by the House of Lords. The Bills of the right hon. Gentleman certainly excited a great amount of hostility. But here was a Bill, the general principle of which providing old-age pensions out of the State funds, was accepted by all Members of the House, even by the hon. Member for Preston. Weeks and weeks had been given to the consideration of the details of the Bill. A roving inquiry had been engaged in by the Committee which sat to investigate the question of old-age pensions. That Committee examined six schemes and reported in favour of the scheme before the House. Therefore it must be taken that this was a problem with regard to the principle of which there was no controversy. The House had considered every detail of the Bill, and now there were only four or five general points it desired to discuss. It desired to discuss whether it should be a contributory or a non-contributory scheme. That point had already been discussed for two days. The other points were the reduction of the age from seventy to sixty-five—that had already been discussed to a certain extent—the sliding scale, and the amount to be given to two old persons living together. Those three points the House would want to discuss, and for those points one day and a half was allocated. In that time they should be discussed very effectively. After all, discussion in Committee was not like a discussion in set debate. It was an occasion on which short speeches were made, though perhaps a great many more Members took part in the discussion. The other two points were the industry test and the pauper test. They had also been raised on Second Reading. There had been hardly any criticisms on any other part of the Bill. For those points the Government had allotted a day and a half; and for the question of the machinery of the Bill one day was allotted. He thought that met every real point on which the House had expressed a desire for discussion. So far as he could see, all the points raised by the House in criticism of the Bill on Second Reading could be covered in five days. Taking everything into account, the Government had dealt, he would not say liberally by the House, because this, after all, was a restriction on the full liberty of discussion in Committee, but fairly. Given the necessity for guillotine Resolutions of this kind—and he did not think any one who had been in the House fifteen or twenty years would challenge the proposition which had been laid down by the Leader of the House that it was absolutely impossible in modern conditions of Parliamentary warfare to get through their measures without introducing a summary method of this kind—he ventured to recommend this Resolution to the House as being, on the whole, a fair allocation of time—an allocation which would enable every point he had indicated to be raised and fairly discussed. He did not think a Government had a right so to apportion time as to shut out discussion upon matters where opposition arose, and the arrangement of time in the Resolution had been made to allow of the raising of all the substantial points of criticism.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee Stage, Report Stage, and Third Reading of the Old-Age Pensions Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—Five allotted days shall be given to the Committee Stage of the Bill, and: (*a*) The proceedings on Clauses 1 and 2 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 7.30 p.m. on the second allotted day; and (*b*) the proceedings on Clause 3 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the third allotted day; and (*c*) the proceedings on Clauses 4, 5, and 6 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fourth allotted day; and (*d*) the proceedings on the remaining clauses of the Bill and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee Stage to a conclusion shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fifth allotted day, and the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put. One allotted day shall be given to the Report Stage of the Bill, and all matters necessary to bring the Report Stage to a conclusion shall be proceeded with, and the proceedings thereon brought to a conclusion, at 10.30 p.m. on that day. One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings of that stage of the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day, or if that day is a Friday at 5 p.m. After this Order comes into operation, any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day; provided that Friday shall not be considered an allotted day except for the purposes of the Third Reading of the Bill. For the purposes of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker, or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee Stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking Private Business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to recommit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall: (*a*) Prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) said the right hon. Gentleman had with great lucidity explained why the Government were bringing forward this Motion. He could not help expressing his regret that the duty, ably as it had been discharged, had not been performed by the Leader of the House, because it was only the Leader of the House who on these subjects could deal with the situation with authority.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the Prime Minister had an engagement elsewhere.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he was aware that the right hon. Gentleman had an engagement elsewhere, but in fixing that engagement he had also arranged to take this business to-day. He regretted that in making that double engagement he had so contrived matters that it did not fall to him to carry out the duty which he thought should be left to the Leader of the House, if he was in a position to perform it. He thought that, in the circumstances of the case, this Motion might have been brought on at a later date, say Friday, without the sacrifice of any Government time, and in that case they would have had what they could not have from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, something more than a mere defence of the Motion, namely, a statement from the Leader of the House of the view which the Government now took of these perpetual Motions for curtailing the liberties of the House. They had curtailed their liberties in respect of discussions in Committee and on Report to an extent which, if not in kind, certainly differed in degree from any precedents. They had expressed the profoundest regret at this perpetual necessity to go beyond any precedents, and they had constantly indicated that they were turning over in their minds some plans for bringing this scandal to an end. It was from the Leader of the House that they would like to learn at what degree of maturity those plans had arrived. This, which as a passing trouble might be tolerated, was really intolerable as a perpetual rule under which the House was to carry on its work. For that reason, while complimenting the right hon. Gentleman on the ability with which he had carried out his task, he could not help regretting that the duty had been left to anybody but the Minister on whom, he thought, by precedent it devolved. If he turned from that general consideration to the arguments presented by the right hon. Gentleman, he had to express his extreme gratification at the amount of wisdom which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had extracted from previous utterances of his on kindred subjects. They had to wait long sometimes before obtaining recognition from the party opposed to them of the merits that might be contained in their speeches. It was not often that they were rewarded, the harvest was not instantaneous, but when it came on rare occasions like the present, it appeared to be a full one. The right hon. Gentleman had apparently spent his intervals of leisure in reading the speeches he had made, and had found nothing but merit in them—merit which had not appeared to him and his friends at the time they were delivered. He supposed the merit which had been found in his speeches was due to the still more surprising fact that the right hon. Gentleman had read his own speeches and had found nothing in them inconsistent with the procedure which he had just recommended to the House. This admiration filled him with astonishment. He did not know whether to be more flattered by the compliment which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had paid him than astonished by the happy blindness which appeared to have come over the right hon. Gentleman when interpreting his own utterances, delivered when he occupied a less responsible position. If he understood the right hon. Gentleman rightly, he actually had the courage to quote the case of the Education Bill in 1902, and to say that the defence made in that year, when the closure was moved after the Bill had been thirty-six days in Committee, commended itself to his approval. On that occasion, the Prime Minister, on the general principle which ought to govern them when they were dealing with a case of this kind, used words which were very apposite, or at all events so striking that he might be permitted to read them. It was on 11th November, when the House had been sitting almost continuously, with a brief holiday, from the ordinary period of meeting to near Christmas, that the present Prime Minister, in dealing with the closure proposal of the Government—after the Bill had been thirty-six days in Committee—to bring the discussion to a close within a reasonable number of additional days (and he might parenthetically remark that the additional number of days was greater than was now to be allowed to the Committee under the present Resolution) used the following words—

> "I venture to say that until this debate, whether you look back to the precedents of the past or to the reason of the thing, both the theory and the practice of the House of Commons have been that this procedure, which we all regret, which none of us like, which we admit

> to be inconsistent with the elementary rights and privileges of a debating assembly—this procedure has never been, and ought not to be resorted to except in one or two cases, in a case of extreme urgency in the interests of public order, or in the case where a Bill, having been carefully considered both by the country and in Parliamentary discussion, is ripe for a final decision. What are you doing here? You are violating those traditions; you are flying in the face of experience.

That was the view of the Prime Minister at that time. It had all the air of being a considered view, of being his general decision as to the occasions on which they might introduce closure by compartments.—[Cheers.] He gathered from the cheers interpolated by the right hon. Gentleman that the distinction which was drawn between the long discussions which they had in 1902 and the discussions which they were to be allowed to have under the Resolution of the Government in 1908 was that the present Bill had been thoroughly discussed in the country, and that the Act of 1902 was not thoroughly discussed in the country. Did the right hon. Gentleman seriously say that? Did he say that the details of this Bill—because it was only with the details that they were concerned—had been thoroughly discussed in the country? It was perfectly true that all parties, and he thought he might go the length of saying that almost all men of all parties, had expressed their desire to see some form of pensions established. But was that a reason for curtailing the discussions in Committee of the method by which that very difficult and critical operation was to be carried out? The right hon. Gentleman in 1902 raised the objection—he did not say whether it was a well-founded objection or not—that the Education Bill ought never to have been brought in because the principle had not been considered at the previous general election. That was a Second Reading objection. That did not justify prolonging night after night, week after week, and month after month the discussion of details, and what he wanted the House to consider was what justification the Government had for the limitation which they were now proposing, not upon a debate on the general merits of some scheme or other for old-age pensions, but upon their right to discuss the particular plan for old-age pensions which the Government on their responsibility had thought fit to put before the House. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman had given them no justification. He had told them, indeed, that every Government in preparing a Bill knew exactly what the questions were which would be raised, and that every Government therefore was competent to fix the length of time which should be devoted to the discussion of those questions. He could not conceive a principle more antagonistic to the liberties of that House, or more utterly subversive of all the privileges of a debating assembly. No Government, not even this Government, was gifted with these powers of prophecy. Any man with the smallest knowledge of the House of Commons was well aware of the need of free discussion and free commentary in that House, especially when the Bill seemed to be so ill thought-out and so little believed in by its authors. The right hon. Gentleman came down and told them that he knew all the points of controversy. How could he know all the points of controversy? New points arose which had been anticipated neither by the framers nor by the critics of the measure, and which deserved and ought to have far greater discussion than the Government were prepared to allow. It was quite true that the framers of the Bill had done their best to limit the information of the House upon vital parts of the Bill, and in that sense they were likely most improperly to limit discussion. For instance, the right hon. Gentleman had mentioned the alteration of the age from seventy to sixty-five. How could they discuss that alteration, except with reference to the financial condition of the Exchequer and the resources of the country? Everyone would like to reduce the age from seventy to sixty-five, but the only argument against it was that it would cost an immense amount of money to do so. The Government had not told them, he did not believe that they had made up their own minds, how they meant to provide even the money required for their present scheme. How was the Committee to be in a position to deal, without any means of forming an accurate judgment, with the problem of the age at which pensions should be given? Let them take another point. They could not avoid touching upon the Poor Law. In other words, how were they to distinguish between points affecting the pension scheme and the Poor Law; how could they discuss those points until they had the opinions which the Poor Law Commission would shortly lay before the country? It was impossible. Their debates were curtailed not merely by the "gag" which the Government were now imposing upon them, but also by the fact that the Government had chosen this particular moment and this particular occasion for bringing forward their proposal. There was a third contention by the right hon. Gentleman. He told them, and he was amazed at the statement, that the House had decided last night against a contributory scheme. The House did nothing of the kind. It was perfectly true that the House rejected an Amendment which, among other things, touched upon the question of a contributory scheme, but the right hon. Gentleman must have known perfectly well that there were a great many Members of the House who would like, before objecting to a contributory scheme with all its obvious advantages, to have heard it adequately discussed, but who were certainly not prepared to vote for an Amendment which would have the effect, not merely of turning out the Government, but of stopping all further progress with regard to the Bill at once. The decision of the House last night was whether the Bill should or should not be read a second time. The question of a contributory scheme was not even touched. It was never seriously debated except by the hon. Member for Preston, and almost all information in the possession of Members of the House upon the subject of the scheme which had been in operation for years and successfully in Germany was based, not upon any information which the Government had given them, not upon any information which the Government had acquired for themselves, for they had not acquired any information themselves, but upon the speech of the hon. Member for Preston. He, speaking for himself, had had no opportunity of making himself acquainted with the working of that scheme, and if their debates were curtailed, as they certainly would be, by the fact that their information upon this work in other countries was inadequate, that was a method of shortening debate quite as bad as the more brutal plan which the right hon. Gentleman had laid before them in the Resolution. But there was an even stronger criticism which he would pass on the methods of the right hon. Gentleman. He had told them that on the Second Reading certain objections had been raised—objections with regard to the age-limit, disqualifications for pensions, and so forth, but he said there was no criticism whatever on the machinery of the Bill. That sort of observation implied a total confusion in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman between what was appropriate on the Second Reading stage of a Bill and what is appropriate in Committee. He had always been brought up to suppose that in Committee they discussed that which was not appropriate to the Second Reading of a Bill and *vice versa*. That was the old and sound doctrine of Parliamentary discussion. But the right hon. Gentleman looked back over the two days they had had on the Second Reading of the Bill, and laid it down that because they did not raise points appropriate for Committee only they were not to be allowed to discuss them in Committee, or only allowed to discuss them with the narrowest limitations and the smallest provision of time. He really could not conceive a doctrine more subversive of the proper method of carrying on a debate in that House. His own personal belief—though it was not a subject on which he felt very confident to give an opinion as one speaking with authority—was that the machinery of the Bill was extremely bad and some persons in whom he had great confidence told him that it was absolutely unworkable. But, of course, nothing so far had been said upon the point because it was not appropriate to the Second Reading. The right hon. Gentleman quoted him as having stated that no Government, as regarded its great measures, could ever afford or ought to afford to be beaten by time—in other words that they could not and ought not to be expected to allow themselves to be thwarted by the Opposition simply by the use of the methods of the House and the expenditure of time. He thought that was perfectly sound doctrine, but it carried with it as an inevitable and necessary corollary that the Government should so arrange its business as not to overtax the time of the House. It was perfectly true that a Government must be allowed to pass its great controversial measures if it could get the assent of the House, but it was not the less true that a Government which had that power must not abuse it by bringing in too many first-class controversial measures in the course of one session. It must be manifest to the House that while they still retained many of their most valuable privileges, and still carried out some of the most important functions entrusted to the representative assembly of the State, they were rapidly losing, if they had not already lost, that great privilege of commenting upon and moulding the details of Governmental legislation. They could still ask for a day for a Vote of Censure and attempt to turn out a Government. They could still comment on the procedure of the Executive by way of Questions, by moving the Adjournment of the House, by commentary in Committee of Supply; and they could still give or withhold their general assent to the legislative schemes of the Government. All that was indeed left them in full measure, but they were losing, if they had not already lost, that other privilege, not less valuable, of commenting upon details of Government Bills.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): You did more than any other living man to take that away.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he did not understand the relevance of the interruption. Did the hon. Member deny the truth of his statement? Granted, for the sake of argument, that he was the criminal, did the hon. Member deny the fact?

Mr. DILLON: No, I heartily agree with you.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR thought it was time the Government, which had gone so far beyond anything he had ventured to do in the times referred to by the hon. Member for Mayo, and who had so much bettered his example, and who said they had the matter under consideration, not merely as an abstract question to be brought up now and then when this sort of Resolution was moved, but as a practical subject to be dealt with, should bring forward some plan by which in an adequate measure they could arrange for the allocation of their own time. It was quite impossible to go back to the old system. No Government could ever do it. He admitted also that to work out a new satisfactory system presented extraordinary difficulties, and he did not wish to press the Government to come to too rapid a decision or too hastily to mature their plans. If he had a general commentary to make upon their procedure, it was that they did not think enough over their plans and that they were rather too crude in their very well-meaning projects. If the Prime Minister and his colleagues thought themselves justified in moving Resolutions which curtailed the liberties of the House as they had never been curtailed before, as they were never curtailed by any Government of which he had been a member, if they meant to move forward upon that path, along which they appeared less and less reluctant to move, he begged of them, in the interests of some of the most valuable work which that House could do, to see whether it was not possible to have something better than the crude suggestion which the right hon. Gentleman had given them. Hon. Members below the gangway announced that they meant to press divisions upon five or six points. Other Members might have other points which they wanted to press to a division, and he did not see how everyone was to have a discussion or division. Of course they all knew by experience that when a Government took this line they practically challenged the Opposition not to give undue assistance to progress. To expect otherwise was to require the House to be what it showed no approach to being—an assembly of angels. It was quite impossible to have a business-like discussion under such procedure. They would never get it unless they carried with them the general assent of all parties in the House. The Government had done nothing to bring that common agreement to any kind of fruition, and it was with profound regret he saw the Prime Minister bettering—or worsening—the example of his predecessors in office, and holding out no hope whatever that he had in his mind any practical scheme for terminating the deplorable evils which were eating into the vital functions of that House, and by which the power of the House in regard to working out the details of Bills was rapidly but effectually being destroyed.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said he could not understand the Leader of the Opposition with his record opposing a guillotine Resolution, without at the same time conveying to the House that he was all the time talking with his tongue in his cheek. If the present Government were to propose a Resolution twice as drastic as the one under consideration they would not have equalled the example which the Leader of the Opposition set them when he was in office. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh!"] Those interruptions apparently came from hon. Members whose membership of this House was of quite recent date.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Manchester!

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR said the Leader of the Opposition must remember that when he was proposing his guillotine Resolutions the Irish Party warned him that if the Liberals came into power they would take very good care to use the same weapon, and now forsooth the right hon. Gentleman appeared to be shocked and scandalised because those prophesies were being realised. He wished to call the attention of the House to the picture which the right hon. Gentleman had given of the conditions of Parliamentary proceedings at the present moment. The Leader of the Opposition was a great champion of the *status quo* in that House. The Nationalist Members and nine-tenths of the Party opposite, including the Labour Party, were in favour of a reform upon this question because Parliament was not able under present conditions to discharge its proper functions with satisfaction to the United Kingdom or to the Empire at large. This Parliament was absolutely incapable of discharging its duty not only to Ireland, Scotland or Wales, but to England. The Leader of the Opposition had laid it down that no Government could expect to pass more than one great measure in a single session. If that were true it meant the bankruptcy of that Assembly. To a House of Commons elected by the masses of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, specially to deal with long overdue arrears of social reform, such a doctrine was the doctrine of despair. The second criticism of the Leader of the Opposition was that the power of the Executive of the day was becoming so strong that discussion upon the legislative proposals of the Government was now impossible. The right hon. Gentleman had spoken of the present conditions eating into the heart of this Parliament, but in saying that he was only stating what every observer of the House fully recognised. They all knew that it was now in the power of an Opposition to prevent even one measure passing unless the Government resorted to the guillotine. It was refreshing to him to hear the right hon. Gentleman speak of the guillotine and the gag. During the seventeen years when the Leader of the Opposition was the Leader of the House he made the guillotine almost a normal and regular part of its proceedings.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said the hon. Member must really allow him to correct his statement. A Return had been published of the number of closure Resolutions which had been passed, and if the hon. Member would look at it a glance would suffice, for he would see clearly what was done by each Government in this respect. He would see clearly the number of days spent in Committee upon each measure before the guillotine was resorted to, and if he could, after perusing the statistics, repeat the charge he had made against him more than once in his speech he would be very greatly surprised.

MR. T. P. O'CONNOR said he did not desire to pursue that point. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh."] He hoped hon. Members above the Gangway would exercise that restraint which a few weeks of Parliamentary decorum would teach them. His criticism was not so much of the right hon. Gentleman or the guillotine as of the conditions which made the guillotine absolutely inevitable whichever Party was in power. How did the gag begin? The Leader of the Opposition began his Parliamentary life a few years before him, but they were more or less coterminous, and he well remembered that in 1880 when he first entered the House there was no such thing as the closure in any shape or form. He had seen an hon. Member get up at Question-time and move the adjournment of the House, and he had seen at three o'clock in the morning a subject being discussed which arose after the sixteenth or seventeenth Question on the Paper. Upon such occasions he himself had made speeches which the House might take it from him were exceedingly eloquent, although they were not reported. On many occasions he had made speeches of one or two hours duration, and it was to meet such cases as those and to cope with strenuous opposition that the right hon. Gentleman established the Closure. He thought it was about time the Leader of the Opposition had the courage and sincerity to face the issue. It was no use blaming his successors for doing what he did before them, because he knew that if his Party and the Party opposite were to change places to-morrow he would have to do himself the very thing which he was now opposing. The evil lay deeper than the right hon. Gentleman was ready to acknowledge, and he was entitled to say to him and to everybody on his side with the exception of the irreconcilable little lot from the North of Ireland, who were the best apostles of Home Rule in the House, that they ought to try and meet the situation and save them from these temporary tinkering methods which hampered efficient criticism, and assist in getting a proper rearrangement of the business of the House of Commons.

Mr. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) said he was present in the House in 1880 when the closure rules were passed. They were regarded then as so un-English that they used to call them by their French name *clôture*. He thought the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool was extremely inaccurate when he said that the Leader of the Opposition had moved guillotine Resolutions much more drastic than the one under discussion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposition that they should decide beforehand what they were to discuss in Committee was the most astounding he had ever heard. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that he could allocate the time that ought to be allotted to the various propositions that would come before them in Committee before he knew what they were. But this Motion was on the Paper on Monday, and the discussion on the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill did not conclude until Tuesday night. How, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman could have anticipated what points would be raised in Committee before the Second Reading debate commenced passed his understanding. He voted for the Second Reading of the Bill because he wanted to see some measure of old-age pensions introduced, and because he was desirous that a full discussion of the various points that might arise should be afforded in Committee. That, however, was to be denied them. This was the very first Bill of outstanding importance to be submitted to a Committee of the Whole House, and yet the opportunities for its discussion were to be seriously curtailed. The fact was the Government brought in a great many more measures than they could possibly pass. They took credit for devolution to Standing Committees, but he could not see that they were doing very much good. How was the Bill getting on in the Irish Committee? [A Nationalist Member: Very well.] A considerable amount of time was spent in the discussion of Bills which the Government brought in knowing that they were not going to pass. It was commonly called window-dressing, and it was a positive insult to private Members that their Bills should be brought forward and thrown at them like bones to a dog. If a Minister brought in a crude measure which had not been thought out the Whips were called in and it was sent to a Committee upstairs, and Members were expected to gorge themselves upon its ill-cooked frame, while right hon. Gentlemen sat in their Olympian grandeur on the Treasury Bench forging their thunder-bolts. If he were to give his own experience of Standing Committees, he could a tale unfold which would soften even the heart of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was a Member of the Scottish Committee which sat on Tuesdays and Thursdays. He found no fault with having been made a member of that Committee. It was a liberal education to be there. He attended a meeting of the Committee a few days ago, and it was an occasion never to be forgotten. The hon. Member for Mid Lanark was giving a definition of Scottish education, and he spoke for forty-five minutes. They were told on that occasion of boys of fourteen years of age who were familiar with Virgil and the binomial theorem. These were experiences which he did not wish to lose. Hon. Members could not attend the meetings of all the Committees of which they were members. He believed there was a meeting of the Scottish Committee to-morrow. [AN HON. MEMBER: No, it was to-day.] He forgot; to-morrow was the Cup Day at Ascot.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): What you want really is a holiday.

MR. LAMBTON said he was obliged to attend a meeting of a Select Committee when the Scottish Committee was also sitting. His hon. friend the Member for the City of London was also a member of the Scottish Committee, and there was nothing he more deeply regretted than being unable to attend the meetings.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): He never makes a speech there.

MR. LAMBTON said English members went there to be informed. Last year the charge was brought against them that they made too many speeches, and now they were taunted with not speaking at all. He wished to deal with this question seriously, and to point out that there were too many Committees, and that the business of the House could not be done properly. Members could not be in two or three places at once. It would be much better if instead of having so many Government Bills introduced they had two or three reasonable and decent measures which could be properly considered in the House and not drastically closured. Last year the Scottish Committee sat for twenty-three days discussing a Land Bill. The English Land Bill of last session engaged the attention of another Committee. Had that measure been a great success? He did not believe that a single small holding had been established under it yet. If that Bill had not answered expectations what were the reasons? One of the reasons was that they had not the assistance of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, who was unable to attend the meetings of the English Committee because he was a member of the Scottish Committee. In the English Committee they lost for the same reason the assistance of sixty or seventy Scottish members, admittedly the best intellects of Western Europe in the discussion of the English Bill. The system of Standing Committees had broken down. It appeared to him that the Government had found out that this was a Bill which they dare not have fully discussed by the Whole House in Committee, and therefore they gave notice of the closure Resolution before the measure had passed the Second Reading and before they knew what objection would be taken to it. They allowed five days for the Committee stage of the Bill, and yet said that they were upholding the dignity of Parliament. He thought the Resolution ought not to be passed.

*MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.) said he did not propose to criticise the Resolution moved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had no doubt that the time allotted by the Resolution for the consideration of the Bill during the Committee stage was ample and sufficient. He wished, however, to make one or two remarks on the general situation affecting the business of the House. If they wasted their time as they usually did on unimportant parts of the Bill, and then found that great principles had to be decided under the guillotine Resolution, however liberal might be the days allotted by the Resolution, it seemed to him perfectly clear that there was something wrong in the organisation of business. If the great principles contained in the measures submitted to the judgment of the House of Commons had to be passed in that way without discussion whilst an inordinate length of time was spent on minor matters, some amendment of the system was wanted. He did not wish to detain the House long, but he supposed an effort would be made to continue the discussion of the Resolution throughout the whole of the day. He did not think that any Member of the Labour Party would have any part or lot in any dilatory or obstructive business of that kind. He desired to suggest a possible way out of the difficulty. He had listened with the greatest attention to the Leader of the Opposition, and though his own experience of the House had been very short —only about two years and a half —he agreed with almost all the right hon. Gentleman said as to the deadlock in Parliamentary business with which they were at present faced. He was not disposed to take part in recrimination on one side or the other as to where the blame should rest, but every Member of the House of Commons, to whatever Party he belonged, should be exceedingly anxious to see some reorganisation of the procedure of the House which would give power to the House over legislation and over the executive action of the Government. It was surely beyond question that some alteration was necessary. He remembered that during the discussions of the Education Bill, and other measures of a like character, guillotine Resolutions had frequently closured a whole series of important Amendments that ought to have been discussed. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone had an Amendment on the Paper to the Resolution now under consideration. He had great sympathy with the noble Lord, but that Amendment, to his mind, proceeded partly on the same lines as the guillotine Resolution itself. It simply suggested the appointment of a Committee to mark out portions of the Bill which should be considered within a given time and the closure would then operate according to their position in the Bill. It was because of the principle which was condemned in the guillotine Resolution that Members were frequently precluded from debating Amendments which ought to lead to the amendment of very important parts of the Bill. His own suggestion was that there should be a Committee appointed when any Bill, such as the Old-age Pensions Bill, was under consideration, to determine which Amendments should be considered first in order of importance. In that way whenever the closure operated—as it was self-evident it must under the conditions of modern political warfare—opportunity would be given to decide important principles which might be at stake, instead of taking up time discussing Amendments at great length which were relatively unimportant. The Committee, of course, should represent all sections of the House. The hon. Member who had just made a most amusing speech on the Resolution seemed disposed to think that the Standing Committees were a failure. For his part he was fully persuaded that if ever the business of the House was to be organised in such a way as to give private Members effective control and to ensure that Bills were adequately discussed it must be by an extension of the system of Standing Committees. He admitted of course that at present there were certain very serious drawbacks to the Standing Committee system. He had reason himself to know how difficult it was to attend the sittings of the House and the sittings of the Committees as well. Since the commencement of the present Parliament, he had sat on the Police and Sanitary Committee which met three or four times a week, commencing work at half past eleven o'clock and generally overlapping the sitting of the House by an hour or an hour and a quarter. No one could do the best for his Parliamentary work if he sat from half-past eleven in the forenoon till half-past eleven at night, with an occasional all-night sitting thrown in. He therefore spoke feelingly on the matter. Yet he was not inclined to say that the Standing Committee principle was a bad one; on the contrary, it was a good one. But experience pointed to the necessity of a better organisation of the Committee business. His suggestion was that there should be separate days or series of days for Committee work and other days or series of days for the work of the full House. It did not appear to him that there should be any difficulty in developing such a system. It would give every Member an opportunity of taking part in every stage of business of the House. The whole subject needed careful consideration, and it was a crying necessity that something should be done. He doubted whether there was any Member of the House who was more democratically inclined in opinion than he was, or more opposed to hereditary legislatures; but, notwithstanding that, he felt that the question of the procedure of the House of Commons was infinitely more important at the present moment than the question of the reform of the House of Lords. He knew of no question which was more pressing for solution. It was a disgrace to a great nation that it should endeavour to carry on its business as the House of Commons did under existing conditions. What would happen when they got into Committee of the Whole House after this Resolution was passed? Probably a dozen Members on each side who were following the business very closely would be debating the various points. They would be half-draftsmen and half-legislators. He did not profess to be a draftsman; it was not his business. His business was to settle principles, leaving it to draftsmen to put the principles into words. When the Committee of the Whole House was sitting on the Old-Age Pensions Bill there might probably be 400 Members within the precincts of the House, but only some dozen on each side of the Chamber dotted about here and there, some listless, some engaged in conversation, not many following the debate. The remainder would be on the Terrace, in the smoking-room, or in the Library, or elsewhere, some industrious and some the reverse. Members not present in the House could not tell what business had been, or was being, discussed. He did not blame them overmuch for being absent from the Chamber; for many questions were, in all probability, being discussed semi-audibly between the front benches, it might be arising out of Amendments which were only in writing and not printed on the Paper. It was impossible under these conditions to discuss a Bill properly. What happened? Members who were away did not know whether the issue under discussion was important or unimportant. The division bells rang, and 200 or 300 Members, who had not heard a word of the discussion, came trooping in and were driven like sheep into the "Aye" Lobby or the "No" Lobby by the Whips, and he knew by experience many of them oftentimes voted contrary to the way they would have voted had they heard the debate. That was a pretty position for the Mother of Parliaments. Surely the intellect on the front benches could evolve a better system than that.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is treating in a very general way the whole procedure of Parliament. I do not think that really arises on this Question.

*MR. JOWETT apologised if he had contravened the rules of order, but said he was pleased to have been allowed to go so far. He would endeavour to connect his remarks with the Resolution. Under this Resolution the House would find itself in the position he had described. That was his point, and he had risen to appeal to the Government to release the House of Commons from its present difficulty, and to apply some time to the organisation of the business of the House in such a manner as would enable it to be effective for the work which Members were sent by their constituencies to do. Hon. Members representing the Nationalist Party in Ireland always accepted the opportunity given by these Resolutions to point their own particular moral and adorn their own particular tale, and of that he did not complain. In fact, he associated himself with them in their demand for Home Rule. But supposing there was Home Rule for Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, there would still remain this procedure question to be settled, otherwise the business of the country could never be conducted on lines which would be a credit to the House of Commons and to the country.

*MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby) said he had listened attentively to this debate as he had listened to similar debates ever since he had been a Member of the House, and he rose to appeal to the Government once more in the hope that they would respond to the feeling, more widely felt than expressed, that they should not have recourse to these guillotine Resolutions, but should turn their minds to devising some method of conducting the business of the House without stifling debate, which was dying under the present system. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made out a reasonably good case for the allocation of time to this Bill, but he (Mr. Leif Jones) listened with more sympathy to the Leader of the Opposition whilst he put the case against the Resolution, and he admired the detachment of mind which enabled the right hon. Gentleman to make the protest he did, for if any one had done more than another to encourage these gullotine methods it was the right hon. Gentleman himself. The Leader of the Opposition even succeeded in evincing some surprise that the Government was more and more making use of such Resolutions. What did he expect? Of course they bettered his example. It was human nature. He was an optimist; he believed men wanted to do what was right. The first time a man went wrong the inward voice of conscience warned him; the wrong path was at first difficult to take. But when they disregarded the inward monitor, and cultivated a robust conscience, the path of wrong became easy to tread. He had no desire to prolong the debate, he simply pleaded for what he feared was becoming a lost cause, in the House, the right of free discussion. Long before he was a Member of the House he remembered a well-known and highly-respected Member, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, telling him that he was proud of the House and its procedure, because it was the one assembly in the world where free discussion was allowed, and in which a question was thrashed out from every point of view. That was no longer true. Now the House passed Bills without taking care to make them as good as they could be made, and that he held to be thoroughly wrong. What right had they to make laws which had not been thoroughly thrashed out? The situation was most serious, and he asked the Government to deal with it. The Leader of the Opposition had told them it was impossible to go back to the old system. Whilst that might be true, they might certainly do better than drift on as they were doing. The Government had to some extent realised this in their Resolution, for they had allotted a certain time to each portion of the Bill, which was decidedly better than the old system. The Government thought they knew all the points that would come up for discussion, and he was prepared to acknowledge that they might know more about old-age pensions than other Members of the House, but it was of the essence of free discussion that unexpected points cropped up. The truth was that the fixing of a time at which a given clause or a given Bill should become law could not possibly ensure the full discussion of a Bill. There could not be free discussion if there was any fixed period when debate must come to an end. If any definite hour was fixed, it was certain that some of the clauses would pass without being discussed. He would prefer, if they were to be limited to five days, that the Eleven o'clock rule should be suspended, and they should be five days of possibly twenty-four hours. No doubt that would put an almost impossible strain on the House, but they ought rather to endure it than pass a Bill without fully discussing it. When the House did not desire a question to be discussed it was easy to keep up the debate on another subject until 10.30 p.m., but if it was known that the question, if it did not come on before 10.30 p.m., would come on later there would be no advantage in prolonging the debate up to 10.30 p.m. on another topic. In fact, the absence of a time-limit tended to shorten rather than prolong discussion. He felt that he was "a voice crying in the wilderness" in this matter, but he had never yet voted for a guillotine Resolution and he hoped he might never be driven to do so. He associated himself with the appeal which had been made by the hon. Member opposite that the Government would take into consideration the question of the procedure of the House and give the necessary time to debate their proposals, so that laws might be passed, in the very best form which it was possible for the House to give them.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) did not know whether he could quite agree with all that had been said by the hon. Member who had just sat down, but he thought hon. Members would contrast the serious and business-like nature of his speech with the reckless statements of the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool. The hon. Gentleman had not thought fit to remain in the House, but had left behind him the hon. Member for East Mayo, who also interrupted the right hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for the Scotland Division was remarkable for the way in which he charmed the House. He charmed it by the magnificent hardihood of the assertions he made for oratorical and dramatic purposes. His zeal in rushing forward and saying that all those who opposed this Motion must do so with their tongues in their cheeks, was only equalled by that of the hon. Member for East Mayo, who put before the House, in a less articulate form, very much the same view. He thought it fair to reply that Members of the Nationalist Party since 1886 had always supported the guillotine resolution of the Liberal Government and had always opposed those proposed by the Unionist Government, a fact which showed that their devotion to the Nationalist cause was not so strong as their devotion to the Liberal Party. He did not agree with the hon. Member for Westmoreland that a time-limit on debate was necessarily an evil. He had expressed the opinion, and he adhered to it still, that they had to deal with two evils—on the one hand, the incurable habit, or rather the settled policy and calculated device of talking against time, and on the other hand the incurable habit of self-advertisement. A time-limit on debate cut at the root of talking against time upon unimportant Amendments; and they would not get rid of the incurable habit of talking for self-advertisement, unless they ceased reporting the debates of that House and recorded nothing but its decisions. Nothing but that would get rid of that difficulty. It was necessary, since the Government had chosen to adopt the policy embodied in this Resolution, for the Opposition to continue, as the Opposition always must, to keep in the public mind the necessary rights of the Opposition and the danger which beset public liberty if those rights were overridden. He spoke with the strictest impartiality; he had advocated a time-limit on debates. When he was a young Member of the House he witnessed the passing in 1882 of the original closure Resolution which had made closure a permanent part of their procedure. He bore in mind that in 1881, under the Prime Ministership of Mr. Gladstone, there was applied to a Crimes Bill for Ireland a series of urgency Resolutions which were in substance practically a time-limit on debate. He remembered when some of them on their platforms in the country in 1882, denounced the procedure proposals then made as an interference with popular liberties; and the most disconcerting thing that happened to some of them was that some of their most valued Conservative supporters met them with the bland remark: "You do not seem to get on very fast with your business somehow." He was afraid that they would all of them find that, though it were five, six, or ten days, there would always be a feeling out of doors that the House might somehow or other arrive at decisions in a more moderate and reasonable space of time. Nobody could say that he did not occupy an impartial position towards this proposal; but there had been no previous instance before the present Parliament where a proposal of this kind had been made without some substantive evidence that it was going to become necessary and inevitable. Evidence had in previous cases been found in the nature of the opposition which the Bill had encountered on the Second Reading, or in the number of Amendments put upon the Paper, or, again, in the actual time consumed in debating Amendments that had been put down. But none of these evidences were existing on the present occasion. In the present case no more than twenty-nine could be found to go into the lobby against the Second Reading of the Bill, and the Second Reading debate was conducted in a way which showed that there were no points going to be seriously raised which might not be dealt with as matters of detail in Committee. Then, again, the division list showed that the majority included substantially Members belonging to either side of the House. Nothing had been said in regard to the Bill which gave the slightest right to suppose that in subsequent debates there was going to be any length of time occupied, or that there was anything approaching or resembling a malevolent intention in regard to the measure. Before the present Parliament he did not believe any such Resolution had been proposed except there was something in the nature of obstruction. In fact the Resolution was moved on this occasion at a stage even before such evidence could be forthcoming. He hoped he had said enough to show that he did not think this Motion could be justified except in one of two cases. Either there must be some evidence that the Bill was going to provoke an unnecessary, impracticable, and impossible amount of opposition, and occupy an impossible amount of time, which was not the case here, or there might be in some quarters evidence of a malevolent intention against the Bill. Or, secondly, if this proposal was to be adopted by the House it should be part of a settled system of which they knew beforehand, and which should be founded on the absolute, inevitable, and physical limits of time within which the House had to finish its labours. Neither of those conditions was forthcoming, and, in acting in this haphazard way, he was sorry to say that the Government had not seen their way to give more freedom to the House or to add to the dignity of its proceedings.

*SIR J. DICKSON-POYNDER (Wiltshire, Chippenham) said he rose to support the remarks by the hon. Member for Westmoreland. He could realise that the condition of business which had been reached in that House had made it necessary to have some form of limitation of debate in Committee. It appeared to him to be absolutely necessary that there should be some limitation of debate in the Committee stage. The number of Members desiring to speak showed no tendency to diminish, and the Committee stage on a first-class Bill afforded so many opportunities for raising popular Parliamentary questions that unless a limit was placed on debate it would continue without any hope of its coming to a conclusion. Many Members who had been in the House for some years would agree with much that had been said by the Leader of the Opposition in the protest he had made, though in the course he had taken on the debate he was on somewhat weak ground, because the right hon. Gentleman himself had seen how in a comparatively few years that which had been looked on as a scandal in the House when Motions of this character were introduced might now be characterised as the normal and ordinary course of their proceedings. It might have been hoped that as this course was proceeded with some discretion would be exercised as to the Amendments put down, many Amendments being unimportant. Under the present procedure they ran the serious risk, which might possibly be realised, that unimportant Amendments would occupy so much time that important Amendments would never be reached and would have to be passed without debate. He did not agree with those who argued, as did the Leader of the Opposition, that in the Second Reading debates the vital questions at issue were not brought out. He thought that in most cases the real questions which would have to be discussed were brought out by some Member or other in the Second Reading debates. But as there was serious danger that some of the questions might not be reached in Committee under the closure, he hoped the Government would seriously consider that intricate problem. Both sides of the House, he believed, would in future have to use the method of limiting debate during the Committee stage, and he suggested that some plan of putting down Amendments should be adopted with due regard to their importance, so that they might be discussed first, leaving unimportant Amendments, or those of a trivial character, to be dealt with last. A discretionary power might be given to Mr. Speaker, or, if that were not approved, a Committee representative of all sections of the House might look over the Amendments and ensure the important ones being placed on the Paper in such an early position as would add to the efficiency of debate. The Committee might be given instructions to deal with the Amendments on their merits, so that all sections of the

House could have their proper claims recognised, those Amendments which were most important being placed first on the Paper so that they might have a chance of being debated. It might be said that partisan results would be decided by Committees, but he had a higher opinion of the judicial position of a Committee in this category. Possibly all sections of the House would be represented on the Committee, and they would in the course of their discussions come to fair and definite conclusions, by which important Amendments raising the main questions should be given first place, which would ensure their being properly dealt with. Another course which might be taken in addition was that some Bills might be allowed, if they were not brought to a conclusion, to be taken over into another session. He was sure they were coming in that direction more and more, and he hoped the Government would give it their careful consideration. Whilst he was a warm supporter of the measure to which the Resolution applied, and would do nothing to raise an obstacle to its passage, he sincerely hoped—and he thought he was speaking for the whole House—that this was the last Bill which would have a Closure Resolution imposed upon it without its being coupled with some scientific method by which the real questions at issue in the different clauses should have an opportunity of being raised, discussed, and voted upon by the House.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said he felt the deepest regret that they should again have to deal with a proposal to place limitations upon their debate. The imposition of restrictions of a drastic character always appeared to him to be an injury to the House of Commons involving a loss of dignity. Successive Governments would no doubt, in years to come propose Resolutions of this class, but he should feel less dissatisfaction and more content if upon every occasion the new proposals were not more drastic and tyrannous and oppressive than any which had gone before. The Prime Minister had expressed regret at this necessity, but he did not hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer language of regret so emphatic, if indeed emphatic at all. He felt considerable alarm at this condition of affairs. If each proposal was to be more severe than all its predecessors, it must necessarily reduce the House of Commons to a mere machine, and they would not in the division lobby express their own opinions as the result of debate amongst themselves or communication with their constituents, but they would be simply acting as proxies for them and giving a dumb and inarticulate record of what they might suppose to be their sentiments. That was a degradation of the House of Commons. It was one of those paths upon which they had been advancing at a dangerous speed to a most perilous goal. The time could not be far distant when this subject would be taken in hand. In considering the subject his mind went back to an early experience in his own career. Lord Stanley, the brother of the Earl of Derby, whose loss every Lancashire man, whatever his creed in politics or religion, most deeply lamented, submitted a series of Resolutions respecting the Government of India at a time when their debates respecting that great dependency almost approached a deadlock. After long and careful debate a certain number of these Resolutions were passed and a Bill was introduced, and the solution of a most difficult problem was arrived at without great delay, and without any of those discords which were always so injurious to a dependency when conducted in the House of Commons. The time proposed to be given either to the Bill taken as a whole or to the compartments into which it was divided was entirely inadequate. The first day and a half were to be devoted to Clauses 1 and 2. The first subsection of Clause 1 was the Bill. It was an old saying amongst those responsible for the framing of Bills that they ought, as far as possible, to make the first clause really the Bill. Here the first sub-clause was really the Bill, and when they had passed it the great principle of the Bill had been adopted and they were only dealing after that stage with the minutiæ and the detail. But this first clause also contained the provisions relating to age—surely a most difficult matter—and with the amount of the pension—again a problem of the greatest difficulty. And then they had to deal with some points which were partly sentimental in their character, but not on that account the less important, such as the penalisation of married life by rendering it less profitable to a married couple to live together than to live separately. That surely was a step downwards. And then they got to the question of the means. This was a wide and far-reaching question, involving difficulties to-day but infinitely greater difficulties to-morrow. And then, as an old Poor Law guardian having had some experience in one of our greatest towns, he could not help feeling the enormous difficulty, the complication—nay, he believed, the impossibility—of the Poor Law question. They might move forward step by step and they might make modifications, but they could not advance in any direction on that great subject without the most tender care and the fullest investigation, so that on the one hand every case of poverty might be relieved, and at the same time they were on their guard against inquisition, negligence, and evil life. He thought these remarks were sufficient to show the absolute necessity of their giving more time to this first section. He believed that both sides of the House were perfectly unanimous in their opinion that when a person had attained such an age as seventy he was entitled *prima facie* to some assistance from the State, given not under circumstances with which all Poor Law guardians were familiar, but under circumstances more conducive to self-respect and showing higher recognition than was now shown of the services rendered to the community by a diligent life of industry and self-denial.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is not entitled to discuss the merits of the Bill. He must confine himself to the question now before the House.

*SIR FRANCIS POWELL: said they ought to take great care as they proceeded, because all these provisions were preliminary and provisionary in their character, but nevertheless they laid a foundation which could not be destroyed. The Prime Minister on the previous night had rather suggested a desire to improve the language of the Bill, and that necessarily must occupy much time. That was a strong evidence of the necessity for allowing more time to investigate these difficult problems. They ought to be jealous of the privileges of the House of Commons. He was aware that the majority must always rule and that the minority must always suffer, but it should not be overlooked that the majority were the real custodians of the traditions of the House of Commons. Therefore, it was the duty of the majority to guard vigilantly the dignity and freedom of that great Assembly. Although at the present time there seemed a desire to have rapid legislation, when the people came to consider the situation more fully and carefully and with a more complete appreciation of the circumstances, they would regret a condition of affairs under which there had been a diminution of the privileges of the House of Commons which impaired the dignity and traditions which successive generations had cherished.

*MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich) said that during the last two and a half years he had come to the conclusion that the powers and privileges of the private Member had been reduced to a minimum. This was not due at all to obstructive tactics on the part of the Opposition, because although there were one or two well-known exceptions, few Members of the Party opposite really obstructed the business of the House. The real cause was the practice of Governments in overloading their programme. They had before Parliament measures of the most important character, and the chances were that the great bulk of Members would not find a single opportunity of discussing them. Another important matter was the failure to carry over Bills discussed in one session to another session. He recollected asking the late Prime Minister a Question upon that procedure, and he was given to understand that there were some very important reasons why the practice he referred to was not desirable. He appealed to the Government to take that matter into their serious consideration. Personally he strongly objected to guillotine Resolutions, not so much because they put a hardship upon the Opposition, but because of the extreme hardship they inflicted upon private Members. On several occasions when there had been important Bills before the House he had endeavoured to address the House, and on the Small Holdings Bill he never got a single opportunity of expressing the opinions of his own constituency, which included some of the most successful small holdings in England. He thought five days was wholly inadequate for the Committee stage of such a Bill as that with which they were now dealing. It was manifest that the measure could not be adequately discussed in that period in Committee, with only one day for Report, and another day for the Third Reading. It simply meant that the great majority of those who had studied this question and followed it with the deepest interest would find it impossible to get in a single word. He thought the party of which he had the honour to be a member ought to set the best possible example upon this question. He joined with his hon. friends who had spoken in the same strain in urging the Government, even if it entailed all-night sittings, to give more time to the Committee stage of this important measure.

*Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) said that any stranger coming into the House would scarcely credit that they were now discussing a proposal to put through in a period of seven days one of the most important social political measures that the House had had to deal with for two generations. He had tried to think of a parallel for this procedure. They would have to go back to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which this Bill proposed in a large measure to supplant. At that time there was a Whig Prime Minister being pushed forward by his Radical followers, and the state of politics was quite confused. He read that during that period the Ministry experienced great difficulty in filling up Ministerial vacancies in the Cabinet because there was great difficulty in finding constituencies willing to re-elect them. That state of things was not without parallel at the present moment. Subsequently the Bill to which he had referred was brought in, and there were twelve sittings given to the Committee stage apart from the Second and Third Readings. That was the time spent when it was difficult to get any discussion at all, and when modern eloquence and ingenuity had not developed to the extent prevailing at the present time. The measure to which he referred was a very controversial measure, but the nearest approach to the measure they were now considering in recent times might be found in the Workmen's Compensation Bill of 1897. That was a Bill that was accepted by the House of Commons in principle, but its details were very complicated and the issues arising out of small Amendments were very serious and were debated with great vigour in Committee for no less than ten sittings, and five sittings were devoted to the Report stage. When the Workmen's Compensation Bill of 1897 got to the Third Reading the present Prime Minister said it was a measure so long and so momentous, not only in what it expressly did, but still more in what it implied and involved, that he thought further discussion was necessary. That was on the eighteenth day of discussion. But to this Bill which was more far reaching, the Prime Minister allotted only seven days. The nearest parallel for the justification of what was now proposed was to be found in the case of the Free Education Bill of 1891, when a Resolution precisely similar to that before the House was brought forward. But no one could say that the Free Education Bill was to be compared in importance to the Old-age Pensions Bill. In the first place, there was far greater general agreement in regard to free education. Only ten voted against the Second Reading of the Bill, and the sum involved was about £2,000,000, instead of, as in the present case, a minimum of £7,500,000. The present Bill was not highly contentious, but it was complicated in detail. He wondered if hon. Members opposite thought of the immensely better position, both as regards power and responsibility, in which methods of this kind placed the other House of Parliament. As a very shrewd judge remarked to him, the centre of political power in this country was slowly but surely passing from the House of Commons to the House of Lords and the Crown, and if hon. Members opposite had their way with the House of Lords, the result would be to put an enormous responsibility upon the Crown. There was no doubt that passing a great number of lines, and even clauses, without discussion, put an entirely new duty upon the House of Lords. They had not only to examine clauses in the light in which they were passed, but to look at clauses on their merits. If by chance he was elevated to-morrow to the Upper House he would at once put down Amendments to leave out everything that had been guillotined in this Bill. He would do so for the sake of the House of Commons, so that it might have a chance of considering them anew. Upon the extreme interpretation of the doctrine of privilege he supposed hon. Members opposite would contend that it was not competent for the other House to move Amendments at all to the Bill, because it was a money Bill. Personally, he believed that to be a dusty, musty, fusty, rusty seventeenth century superstition. But if hon. Members believed in that doctrine, he thought they would find considerable difficulty in applying it in this case. In a complicated Bill of this kind there were always a great many drafting slips which had to be put right. In the case of the Education Bill, when it reached the House of Lords, the Government were obliged to put down some sixty drafting Amendments before the measure was returned to this House. The Government would be in the same position in regard to this Bill. They would have either to mitigate their high-sounding theories in regard to privilege, or to put the Bill through with all its imperfections on its head, and get into the greatest possible administrative and legal difficulties when it came to be enforced. The Prime Minister's action with respect to the procedure on the Bill was an absolute contradiction of the advice he gave to his own Party only a week ago. The right hon. Gentleman then said that concentrated effort on a smaller number of objects was necessary. It was a matter of common knowledge that this Resolution was intended, not to put through this Bill, but to help to put through other Bills which were all behind. Every one knew that there would be no obstruction against this Bill, that it could be carried through under ordinary methods in ordinary time. It was because of the competition among those who advocated different systems that the House was in the difficulty they found themselves in that night. He was sorry the Prime Minister was not present. They all recognised the dignity and strength of his language when the right hon. Gentleman stood at the Table, but unfortunately, there was not always the corresponding strength of action when he was subject to the pressure and importunity of interests, whether masculine or feminine, as the case might be. If the right hon. Gentleman considered the dignity and efficiency of that House of more importance than the importunity of the different sections upon whom his uneasy and unstable reign depended, he would even now withdraw the Resolution.

*SIR FRANCIS CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.) said he regarded this kind of debate as an unsatisfactory and unprofitable waste of Parliamentary time. It seemed to him they had had really more than enough of these recurrent debates on Motions for compartment closure. He was weary of hearing such terms as "gag" and "guillotine" used continually in the House. He did not want slang applied to the procedure and practice of what, after all, was the noblest Assembly in the civilised world. He felt bound to protest against his Leaders for not having by this time thought out some more rational procedure for reconciling the claims of the majority of the House to have its decisions finally carried out, while at the same time giving freedom to the House itself to deal frankly and fully with every important issue in every Bill brought before it. He did not think that problem ought to be insoluble. The creation of a Committee to deal with this matter had been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, and the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone was going to move an Amendment somewhat in that sense. It seemed to him that the suggestion was equally as objectionable as the one in the Motion now before the House. In a Committee appointed on party lines they would have the same evils as had been referred to in the discussion that afternoon. They all knew the unreality of that discussion. Every fair-minded Parliamentarian knew that this question ought to be settled on rational lines which would give reasonable freedom of speech and protect the rights of minorities in the House.

A partisan Committee, with a majority of the Opposition upon it as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, would place the Opposition in an almost intolerable position of authority over the time of the House. It seemed to him impossible that the right hon. Gentleman could seriously suggest such a scheme as that. He had made suggestions of his own which he placed on the Paper as a new Standing Order, but, of course, as a private Member he could not make a Motion that those suggestions should be adopted. He hoped that the Prime Minister, and those working with him, would before long consider all these suggestions and arrive at some decision on the point. It was of vital importance that they should have some absolutely impartial and neutral authority to determine the real issue, viz., that time should not be wasted by prolonged and irrelevant discussions on minor Amendments, but should be concentrated on vital Amendments, which raised the real issues of a Bill, and that the decision of that authority should carry the opinion of the whole House with it. It would be improper for him to enter fully into questions which implied any consideration of what Mr. Speaker's own view might be of the possibility of the Chair taking a more decisive and more important part in the determination of the relation of Amendments to each other and to the Bill, and of the order in which Amendments might be put before the Committee of the Whole House. It seemed to him that there only lay the true solution of the whole matter. Whether the suggestion he had placed on the Paper was workable or not he would not now attempt to argue, but he appealed to his right hon. friends on the Treasury Bench and to right hon. Gentlemen opposite to see whether they could not abandon mere Party strategy and tactics in debates of this character by which Party advantage might be sought by preventing important portions of Bills being discussed and thus leaving the Bills open to destruction by another House. It seemed to him that all such tactics were unworthy of that great Assembly, and they ought to endeavour to arrive at some rational and automatic way of settling these questions which would secure the rights of the majority, free speech to all Members, and save the time of the House in fruitless discussion.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) said that the Government must have been struck by the very remarkable fact that every single speech made from their own side of the House had contained some form of appeal to modify the suggested form of procedure. They knew, of course, that it was not always Gentlemen who spoke like that who went into the lobby in support of their opinions. It would be rather more consistent if their expressions of dissent from the policy of the Government were put into practice in the lobby. He hoped that the very general opinion given on this occasion meant that no Government would place on the Paper another such Resolution as was now before the House. The objections which he saw to the Resolution were that it was useless for its apparent purpose, and that it was absolutely unprecedented. They had been constantly told that it was the duty of this Parliament to set new precedents. A Resolution had been put on the Paper with the intention not of muzzling one Party, or of stopping obstruction, but of muzzling the whole House. There was not a single section of the House which had not expressed a strong feeling in favour of the principles of the Bill, and which did not wish sincerely and thoroughly to improve the Bill; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer had put down this Resolution which would cover all Amendments intended to improve the Bill. It was perfectly possible under the Resolution now proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer entirely to shut out discussion of various important points. It was argued on the other side that that was a method not likely to be adopted, because the House itself was in favour of the Bill; but he suggested that the course now urged by the Government was simply courting opposition and obstruction. They were inviting the Opposition to say afterwards that the greater part of the Bill had not been discussed, and that the representatives of the country had not had an opportunity of saying anything about it. The object of the Government would therefore in that very particular defeat itself. There were three objects in putting down Amendments to clauses: first, when a man wished to advertise himself, which was not altogether unknown in that House; secondly, when a Member wished to improve the Bill, and thirdly, when a Member desired to destroy some important feature of the measure. None of those things were likely to have a very potent effect in a case of this kind, except the Motion they were now discussing He hoped the appeal made by the hon. Baronet the Member for East Northamptonshire would be considered by the Government, for, after all, it had been well said that the position and the character of the House of Commons was of the greatest importance. He was convinced that this constant series of guillotine Resolutions was making the House of Commons ridiculous and absurd in the eyes of those who sent them to the House, and tended to weaken the position of the representative Chamber in the country. It would be unfortunate if such a result were actually brought about. Very big majorities cou'd pass measures of this kind and go to the country and show a long list of measures which they had placed on the Statute-book. That had been a constant boast at recent bye-elections, although it had not had the satisfactory result desired. That showed that the argument did not go down with the electors, and that the country did not value the position and character of the House according to the number of Bills it passed. That was the reason why he hoped that this Resolution, even if it were carried, would not be repeated.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE hoped that the House would now proceed to the consideration of the Amendments to the Resolution put down on the Paper. They had had a long, interesting, and no doubt exceedingly instructive and significant debate, not only on the character of the Motion which he had submitted, but on the general attacks which were made by Resolutions of this kind on the liberty of discussion in the House of Commons. The Government, however, had certainly no reason to complain of the tone and temper of the debate. He was in general agreement with the view that it was deplorable that it should be necessary at all to propose Resolutions of this character in order to get Bills carried through the House. But he asked the hon. Member what was the alternative?

Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Introduce fewer Bills.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he remembered perfectly well the Leader of the Opposition, when he introduced the guillotine Motion on the Licensing Bill of 1904, stating that it was the only Bill of the session. But it was perfectly clear that it did not matter whether the Government introduced one or more Bills. Unless they had a very drastic amendment of the procedure of the House, or a general agreement on the questions which ought to be debated, it was obvious that the guillotine was inevitable. He had been very much struck by that circumstance.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) thought he was right in saying that for seven years after the Unionist Government came in in 1895, they never once brought in a guillotine Resolution.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that up to a certain point they did not have even the closure, But, as the hon. Member for the Scotland Division had pointed out, the work of legislation had grown and continued to grow. The legislative work done by the House now, compared with thirty or forty years ago, had grown enormously, as the hon. Baronet would discover if he looked into the matter. Governments came in with a Queen's Speech promising generally four or five stock measures which they never attempted to carry. Lord Palmerston had four stock measures; a reform of the bankruptcy laws, a reform in the method of the transfer of land, and two others, but he never attempted to carry one of them. The whole attitude of both parties towards legislation had changed. The idea at that time was that the less legislation there was and the fewer the number of Bills the better. Now they legislated on everything, and it did not matter which Party was in power. Only on the previous night the Leader of the Opposition claimed that the record of his Party showed they had passed as many industrial measures as the Liberal Party had done. The difference was not a question of party, but the kind of measures that were passed. That showed there was a complete revolution in the attitude of every section of the House towards the question of legislation. No doubt if hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite were to come into power in the course of the next three or four years they would be subject to great pressure by Members behind them to legislate. That being so, it was obvious that the procedure adequate to get through the business thirty or forty years ago was totally inadequate now. Governments from both sides had come forward with two or three expedients. The Government of 1881 brought in a few expedients, and the House fought the Resolution far harder than his Resolution was being fought now. Hon. Gentlemen opposite fought Mr. Gladstone's guillotine Resolutions in 1892, and adopted them in 1903 and 1904. The Liberal Party fought the Resolutions of the right hon. Gentleman then and they adopted them now. The fact was the exigencies of Parliamentary business were such that each Government in turn were driven to adopt these methods, although they adopted them reluctantly. The right hon. Gentleman had confined himself to a general criticism of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, of the way it was put together and of the finance, but he had not pointed out where the Resolution was unfair. The right hon. Gentleman had not said, for instance, that one and a half days was given to a clause to which should have been given two days. He had not attempted to point out where, in substance, the Resolution was unfair to the House. He admitted, or would admit, that possibly the Government could not carry this Bill through without some form of restrictive procedure of this kind.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he confined his observations to the Resolution as a whole; he did not deal with it in detail.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE agreed that to a certain extent that was a complete answer. The right hon. Gentleman might say it was not for him to point out that they should have given so much time to one clause, and so much to another, but in addressing himself to the Resolution as a whole he might have pointed out that instead of five days, ten should have been given. But no speaker had criticised it on those grounds. One or two hon. Gentlemen might have said there should have been no such Resolution at all.

MR. LAMBTON: Hear, hear.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Member opposite did, but he supported similar Resolutions proposed by the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. LAMBTON said this Resolution was brought in before the Committee stage of the Bill. No previous Resolution had been brought in under such circumstances.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the hon. Gentleman appeared to think that this was a penalising Resolution. It was not a penalising Resolution brought in to punish the Opposition for some misconduct. It was a restrictive Resolution brought in purely to confine the discussion within certain limits. It was not punitive. If the Government had moved a Resolution of this kind after some four or five days' discussion, and had said that there was so much obstruction that it must be put an end to, there would have been some reason for the criticism of the hon. Member. But the Government said: "We must get through our work"—[OPPOSITION laughter]—which hon. Gentlemen opposite thought was a ridiculous thing. Did hon. Members hear the observations of the right hon. Member for the Hallam division of Sheffield? With one of those observations he most cordially agreed. The right hon. Member said that when he used to go down to the country and protest against Closure Resolutions the only answer he got was: "Why do you not get through your business?" That was exactly his own experience. When he attacked in the country the Closure Resolutions of the right hon. Gentleman, he never felt that there was any response, although very often the feeling of the country was very strong on the particular measure.

The general feeling in the country was that the House ought to get through its work. One Gentleman on the Ministerial side of the House thought that this Resolution was rather hard on those who supported the Government. He thought that the supporters of the Government should be the last to complain, because if the hon. Gentleman had had experience of sitting in this House in Opposition he would have known what it meant. If a Bill was brought in without the guillotine there was great pressure brought to bear on Members supporting the Government not to take part in the debate. He knew that in the last Parliament they spoke of the conspiracy of silence, only broken between the hours of nine and ten by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London and the hon. Member for one of the divisions of Sheffield. There was always pressure brought to bear on Members not to take part in the discussion, because their doing so prolonged the debate. Under a guillotine Resolution of this kind there was no consideration of that kind. He knew the effect it had on the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman in regard to the Licensing Bill. During the first five days most of those supporting the Bill never said a word, but directly the guillotine Motion was passed, the discussion was mainly carried on by them. His hon. friend complained that he had not had the opportunity which he wished to have to take part in the debate on old-age pensions, a question in which his constituents took a great interest, and he had asked how was he to get the full opportunity of expressing his view with this five days' limit. Within those five days his hon. friend ought to find ample opportunity, but there was a limit even to that. The hon. Member must remember that there was not a Member of the House whose constituents were not interested in the question of old-age pensions, and if the 670 Members felt it incumbent on them to express their views on every Amendment, the Motion he ought to be moving at the present moment would be for a limit of five years instead of five days. There was that advantage, at any rate, in the time-limit. A good deal had been said about the desirability of there being some Committee for the purpose of scheduling the Amendments and putting them in the order in which they should be discussed, but he was very doubtful of its expediency. He should certainly deprecate very strongly its being done by the Government of the day. It should not be for them to choose their critics. He also deprecated the suggestion that it should be left to Mr. Speaker to do, and he was sure Mr. Speaker would be the first to deprecate such a suggestion. He was not sure either that a Committee was the best method. If ever the rules in this Motion became part of the permanent machinery of debate in the House, he thought the whole thing would settle itself, because the House had a way of picking and choosing Amendments if it wished. In one sense he believed party discipline had attained a higher state of perfection in this country than in any other part of the world, and if a Party really wished to make the best of the time at its disposal, it was in their power to bring pressure to bear on their own supporters to confine the debate within certain limits. He thought that that, in the long run, would be the result of this Resolution. If that failed, it would be desirable to consider the question, but up to the present, it had not been desirable to do so. They had not had sufficient real experience. Up to the present, both parties had been working the guillotine, not with a view of making the best of the time, but as a demonstration of injustice and oppression. The moment this was accepted by both Parties there would be a new attitude towards it, and they would settle down in a business-like way to decide what Amendments they wished to consider. He had overheard the noble Lord opposite say that this would be a party affair. There was something to be said for that view, but after all, the Government could not have a Committee on which they would be in a minority. [" No."] He thought so, but the noble Lord could move his Amendment. The Government, however, must have control of the business of the House. It would be impossible, therefore, for them to appoint a Committee on which they were in a minority, and he was not so sure that the Committee would be the best way of dealing with the matter. But the discussion had been very helpful and very suggestive; and he joined in the regret expressed by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition that the Prime Minister could not be present to take part in the debate. It was obvious that he could not make an authoritative statement on the various suggestions which had been made, whatever might be his own personal view about them. But he really joined in the regret which the right hon. Gentleman had expressed that the Prime Minister could not possibly be present to hear that very instructive debate on the whole question of procedure. He joined absolutely in what the right hon. Gentleman had said at the close of his speech that this sort of thing could not go on without the House taking into account the whole situation. If it was admitted that Parliament could not get through its work, then it was time to consider seriously what were the best means of dealing with the situation. Personally, he was of the opinion of the Member for the Scotland division. It had been always his view that they should eliminate from the Parliamentary purview little trivial matters of local interest and provincial detail. He had listened to the speech of the hon. Member for Durham, which on the whole was a speech in support of his hon. friend the Member for the Scotland division. The hon. Member seemed to regard Scottish business as a great joke. But it was not such a joke for Scotland. They were perfectly earnest about it, and he hoped that the hon. Member would recognise that all these questions took up the time of the House, and were mainly of interest to those Members who sat for the particular constituencies. He found in the course of a debate that the number of those who listened as a rule was limited to the number of those who were anxious to take part. The discussion was also limited to those who were interested in Bills which applied to districts in the United Kingdom. All these were things which he thought the House would have to consider, and the sooner the better, and they would have to consider them very seriously. But this was only a temporary expedient to deal with a temporary difficulty. The Government had to get this Resolution. His hon. friend the Member for Westmoreland had never voted for these Resolutions. Had he ever considered what would happen if they all gave way to their conscience to the same extent? What would happen with the Licensing Bill?

MR. LEIF JONES: I am ready to sit up all night every night to pass that Bill.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE would not say whether the other 669 Members would be ready to do that. In dealing with this question they must take a survey of the whole session. That was a point made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition in the speeches to which he had given such a close study all that morning. It was a point which the right hon. Gentleman constantly made. He said that it was impossible to take into account merely the particular Bill in respect to which the Resolution was brought forward; they must take a survey of the whole session. Of course, the Government were bound to do the same thing, and on the whole he thought that it would be seen that they were dealing with the House very fairly in this particular Resolution. He had heard only two or three Members challenge the general proposition that some summary process of this kind was essential if they were to get through their business. The only thing he had heard was a variety of suggestions from different Members as to the best way of putting the Closure into operation. Personally he had always agreed with the suggestion made by the Leader of the Opposition that there was a great advantage in allocating the time of the House in respect of Bills of this kind. He had heard the right hon. Gentleman once or twice, he thought, rather indicate a general opinion on that point, and he thought that the Leader of the Opposition was also in favour of carrying over incompleted business from one session to another.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR indicated assent.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that all these were obviously questions which would have to be considered at another time. In the meantime they had to get on with the work of the moment, and now, having had this very instructive debate, he hoped that they might be allowed to proceed to a discussion in detail of the various Amendments.

*Sir JOHN RANDLES (Cumberland, Cockermouth) said they had wasted no time up to the present, and it seemed to him that anything in the nature of punitive action was hardly warranted at that stage of their proceedings. From the speeches they had heard and the complaints that had been made during the debate, there seemed to be this in common among private Members, that there was a lack of opportunity to express the views of their constituents not on trivial Bills but on the great measures of the session. Indeed, throughout the whole country attention had perhaps been more effectually drawn to the subject before the House, that of old-age pensions, than any subject which had engaged the political attention of the people for many years past. Notwithstanding the intensity of feeling on the subject, and the long overdue expectation for a measure of this kind, when the Bill, so ardently desired, at length came before the House they were told that it was so urgent that there was no time to allow the ordinary private Member to take that part in the discussion of its details which he might legitimately have expected to do. During their debates they knew perfectly well that Members of both Front Benches naturally took a very prominent part in any discussion. The tendency of Parliament was perhaps to split up into smaller parties, and the representative of any party must take part in each discussion. When they had the representatives of the various groups taking part in the debates it reduced more than ever the time available for the ordinary private Member who wished to express the views of his constituents, whether he was a supporter of the Government or a member of the Opposition. The argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not carry him very far. He thought it amounted to this, that if there were a time limit then the supporters of the in the debate. In the present conditions of debate they knew perfectly that the private Member, whether he was a supporter of the Government or a member of the Opposition, had not much chance of getting into the debate. What they came back to was this. The great measure before Parliament was worth in his opinion the full consideration of every Member of the House. It was not an ordinary Parliamentary Bill passed in the course of their legislative proceedings; the Bill of the Government involved an entire change, it was an entire social revolution which was going to touch the lives of a very large number of the population, not only in the limited manner which the Bill proposed, but in a manner vastly more expensive and more operative for classes not contemplated by this measure, but who would come into benefits such as were indicated for a limited class of persons of seventy years of age. Therefore, he thought that they ought to give full opportunity in the debates for Members to take cognisance of all the points raised in Committee. The great bane of our legislation arose from the fact that measures were brought down to the House, and, whether it was due to the Closure or whatever it might be, were so indigestible that they might be described as half-baked when they were passed over to the country for consumption. The effectiveness of legislation was marred by this procedure, and, in regard to the measure to which this Resolution applied, their time would be well used if they took the whole session to pass into law a Bill of such magnitude. The country would rather have one good sound piece of legislation than a dozen or twenty ineffective measures passed into law, and it was because he believed the House would consider this Bill fairly that he protested against the action of the Government in moving these Resolutions. If the Closure was directed to the improvement of the Bill it would be a failure. If the guillotine was not proposed for the benefit of the Bill under discussion he presumed it was for the benefit of some other Bill, and he claimed that it was the business of the House while dealing with the good as it could be made. In order to do that the House should have full opportunity to deal with the details of the measure so that it should be a sound piece of legislation which in future years might be extended and be the basis of a scheme which would promote the happiness of numbers of their fellow-countrymen.

*Mr. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth) protested against this proposal for limiting their right of speech, especially at this particular time. They had been appealed to to serve in the Territorial Force, and their side had responded very readily, and at the moment most of their members were serving their country in a different capacity from that of Members of Parliament. Then this most important measure was brought on, which not only proposed to restrict their right of speech on this particular Bill, but threatened to be extended to other Bills. He thought it was a most dangerous principle to introduce. The Bill was not only incomplete, it was a mere skeleton of a Bill. They were all agreed on the main principle that it was very desirable to render the condition of the aged poor more comfortable and subject to less irksome restrictions than at present. But the Bill never touched the financial aspect, which, after all, was the most important of all. Without that it was a mere pious aspiration. Supposing some gentleman, Mr. Carnegie for instance, offered £5 a day to be paid to him for his services to the country—a very right thing to do; he would like to have it very much—he would be in favour of it because he would expect to get his money. But supposing some Member above or below the gangway offered it, he should very carefully consider the source from which the offer arose lest it should be no benefit to him, because he might fear he would never handle the money. It was the same in regard to this Bill.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now discussing the Bill. That is not before the House.

*Mr. MEYSEY-THOMPSON said that what he was coming to was that this

part of the Bill, they should have very full and free opportunity of discussing it and saying how the money was to be raised. If they knew that, they would not want such a very lengthy discussion on the details. But as it was, the financial part of the Bill was kept entirely in the background. He claimed that they had every right to full and fair discussion of the Bill and to have these financial provisions fully explained to them, and on all the above grounds he should offer the most strenuous opposition to the proposal.

*Mr. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) thought that these Resolutions were extremely dangerous in other ways than that of general principle, and that the Government had treated the House in a very scant manner by allowing such a short time for discussing the Bill. They could hardly say that the right hon. Gentleman was taking from them the right of free speech, because that was accomplished when the present Government came into power. He was not much concerned for what hon. Members opposite might have to say, because since the election they had got to obey the Government Whips; but with regard to those on his own side of the House he was not sure but that at no very distant time when the position of parties was reversed and a tariff reform measure was before the House, they would not reap very great advantage by concluding the Second Reading, Committee stage, and Report stage of their Bill before the dinner hour, or perhaps, by the courtesy of the Government, they might allow it to continue until eleven o'clock. He was reading the other day Rose's "Life of Napoleon," and found this quotation, which it struck him was somewhat applicable to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

> "A blow was struck at the Tribunate, the only public body which had a right of debate and criticism. It was now proposed (January 1800) that the time allowed for debate should be strictly limited. The Tribunate signed its own death warrant."

It was quite possible that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government had signed the death warrant of free

Chancellor of the Exchequer might go down to posterity as, it would not be as the Napoleon of free speech, but as the autocrat of the guillotine.

SIR F. BANBURY said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had laid down two reasons only in defence of his Motion. The first was that the method of conducting business had changed very much in the last thirty years, since the days of Lord Palmerston. They all knew that was the case. In an interruption, he had pointed out that from 1895 to 1902, which was only from twelve to seven years ago, the then Government never once brought in a guillotine Resolution, though they had Bills that evoked a considerable amount of feeling and discussion. There was, for instance, the Agricultural Rating Bill, in the discussion of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer took an extremely active part. In fact he was very nearly called to order, and, he thought, left the House and refused to take any further part in the debate. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Rushcliffe once stated that the frequency with which these guillotine Motions were proposed was a measure of the incompetence and incapacity of the Government. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had been in power two-and-a-half years, and had introduced five guillotine Motions. He would like to know if the right hon. Gentleman was still of opinion that these Motions were a measure of the incompetence and incapacity of the Government. Very often hon. Members opposite diagnosed the situation correctly, and he was inclined to think the right hon. Gentleman was right. The only other argument that the Chancellor of the Exchequer advanced was that this was not a punitive measure, that it was not intended to punish the Opposition. Of course it could not be intended to be, because only twenty-nine of them went so far as to support the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston. Therefore it was pretty evident that there was no really serious opposition to the Bill, and that there was no fear of obstruction. The only reason given, therefore, was that there must be a definite time limit for the discussion of a Bill introducing a totally novel principle, not because there was any fear of obstruction, but because the Bill was so important that it might, and probably would, lead to a considerable amount of discussion on both sides of the House. That was a very strange doctrine to be brought forward by a Government which had always stood as the champions of free speech. They were told for the first time when there was no obstruction that the state of business was such that more than a certain number of days could not be given to the discussion of any measure however important, and that Members on both sides must be deprived of the right of expressing their views. It was said that there was no particular mandate for the Education Bill. He agreed that there had been a mandate for an Old-Age Pensions Bill, but not for one founded upon the principle of this measure, and therefore that argument fell to the ground. The real reason for the introduction of this Resolution was that the Government wanted to get another Bill through before the Autumn session. He wished to point out that this was a measure of the most momentous importance, and because the Government had got their business into such confusion that they were afraid they would not be able to pass the Licensing Bill before the holidays, they were curtailing discussion, although they admitted that up to the present there had been no obstruction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that he was afraid that the system of closuring debate had grown, was growing, and must grow. He had further stated that it was necessary for the Government to bring in a great number of measures, and in order to carry those measures through time was to be limited. Consequently it simply meant that the time allotted to discussion was to be limited by the number of Bills brought in. It might ultimately come to this, that only three or four days discussion would be allowed upon any measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that nobody on the Opposition side had criticised the number of days allotted to the different clauses. Surely it was difficult to criticise the number of days allotted to any particular clause without knowing what the Amendments were, and as a matter of fact they had not seen those Amendments. Therefore, it was impossible to say what force the Amendments would have, and they could not say whether one clause ought to have more time than another. The Education Bill was discussed for twenty-six days in Committee before the guillotine was applied. He had endeavoured to show that there was really no reason whatever for introducing this guillotine Resolution, except that there were other Bills that the Government desired to pass. There had been no obstruction whatever on that side of the House. He could, if necessary, give many extracts to show that hon. Members opposite had always contended that the only justification for a Resolution of this sort was flagrant obstruction. There might be occasions when it was necessary that such a Motion should be made, but he denied altogether that there had ever been an occasion when one had been put down on the Paper before the particular Bill affected had passed its Second Reading. The Government had determined that, whatever happened, this Bill must pass through Committee, and that was totally contrary to the traditions of Parliament. He challenged hon. Members opposite to show a single case, during the last ten years, when the Conservative Party were in power, where they ever introduced a measure of this sort. He was sure that the country did not desire an important Bill like this should be rushed through the House, more especially when there was no attempt whatever to delay its passage. Once this measure was passed, they could not go back upon it. Even right hon. Gentlemen were not infallible. With every intention to do their best, they might make mistakes, and they were always sure to make mistakes if they did not allow adequate time for the discussion of measures. For those reasons he deplored the Resolution. He knew it was no use discussing the matter, because the Government had made up their minds to pass this Resolution. Merely because the party opposite had obtained a large majority and were desirous of carrying out certain ill-considered pledges made during the heat of the election they were now proposing to change the whole procedure of the House of Commons, which, instead of being the debating chamber of the nation, had now become a chamber to register the decrees of the Government.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) in moving to exempt the Committee stage from the Resolution, said that the Amendment really went to the root of the Resolution. This Bill was particularly what might be called a Committee Bill. It had been said again and again that so far as the principle underlying the Bill was concerned, everybody desired to see some small provision made for old age to enable the old people to end their lives comfortably. It was a question not whether it was a good thing to give old-age pensions or not, but under what circumstances and conditions those pensions should be given. Therefore, the Committee stage was really the most important, because it was there that the House of Commons would come to close quarters with the subject, and then hon. Members would discover what a revolutionary proposal was embodied in the measure. Before the two days debate on the Second Reading had concluded, the Government decided that whatever that debate might show, the Committee stage was to be guillotined in advance and only five days allotted thereto. That procedure could not be justified, and it was altogether novel. Never in the history of the House had a Bill, which was really a part of the Budget, been subjected to a proposal of this kind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, while deploring that he had to propose the Resolution, stated that it was absolutely necessary, because Parliament must get on with its business. What was the business of Parliament? The right hon. Gentleman opposite seemed to regard it as a sort of sausage machine, a mere miserable mechanical instrument, for turning out so much legislative product in a given time. If that was really his view, it was one which was degrading the true position of the House. He himself did not believe that it was the business of the House merely to turn out so many folios of printed statutes at the end of so many weeks or months work. He believed the business of the House mainly was to debate and ventilate measures, and to see that the legislation which it passed was really thrashed out and understood, not alone in the House, but in the country. Why was this Resolution necessary? Before the Second Reading the Government must have come to the conclusion that they were likely to meet with serious or gross obstruction, or else they had come to the conclusion—and this was much more likely—that if they allowed the House of Commons seriously to discuss the Bill they would be driven to great shifts to defend it, that they would be driven from defence to defence, that they would be forced to defend it at the point of the bayonet, and that in any case the discussion would be enormously long. It was admitted that there was no ground for thinking that the Bill was likely to experience serious obstruction. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the principle of the Bill was agreed to. If that was so, what was the object of limiting discussion in the way proposed? The real truth was that the Government knew perfectly well that the Bill could not stand full discussion in Committee. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that the 170 Amendments on the Paper were all perfectly reasonable and proper Amendments, but he had pointed out that their consideration would take the House of Commons from now till the end of August. In that situation on a non-contentious Bill the Government proposed to give five days to the Committee stage. Having taken up that attitude the Government were driven to every sort of monstrous shift in order to justify themselves. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that probably all the Amendments were genuine and proper, and yet the Government chose to treat them as unimportant, and to say that only five days were to be given to their discussion in Committee. That was an enormous claim for any Government to put forward. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he had deduced from the Second Reading debate what the important principles were, but it was abundantly clear that the decision to move the closure Resolution was arrived at before the Second Reading debate was even begun. What were the general principles of the Bill? The right hon. Gentleman said there were only four or five. The principle of the Bill had changed at every stage. The Bill was somewhat of a dissolving view. The right hon. Gentleman, referring to the proposal to substitute a sliding scale for the 10s. income limit, said that that was a principle which ought to be considered in Committee. The Government themselves had completely turned round and announced that the Bill as it stood no doubt embodied their first impression, but they did not take much stock by it. If it was thought desirable, the Government were prepared to consider Amendments in that respect. To talk of the principles of such a Bill having been elucidated on the Second Reading was to trifle with the House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the House would regard as important the definition of persons who were to be disqualified as wastrels, and only last night the Prime Minister had told them that some of the definitions in the Bill were open to criticism. The Government had not in the least made up their minds as to the details of the Bill. He protested against the proposal to curtail the discussion of a scheme which the Government were prepared to alter in almost every essential particular. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had tried to justify the Resolution by saying that the allocation of time beforehand would ensure that the most important principles at any rate should be discussed; he had said that unless the important principles could be discussed in Committee it would be a first-rate Parliamentary scandal. He entirely agreed with the right hon. Gentleman in that. Hon. Members below the gangway had given notice of Amendments of far-reaching importance. A member of the Labour Party had pointed out that many of those Amendments would have no chance of being even mentioned under this Resolution. The Government desired to avoid the necessity of defending the Bill in detail as against free and open criticism; they desired also to avoid the necessity which they would otherwise be under of continually defeating hon. Members below the gangway if they went to a division. He did not believe the Government would be sorry to see the Amendments of the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway squeezed out during the five days allowed for the Committee stage. He shared the apprehensions which had been expressed in all quarters of the House as to the future to which such proceedings must lead. It was perfectly clear that if this principle was to be allowed, the House of Commons would cease to have any reason whatever for existing. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway had given their minds to the details of this scheme which would have such an extraordinary effect upon the social condition of their class, but when it came to the point of their having some effective control over them they were to be deprived by a ruthless Resolution of this kind of the opportunity of discussing them. This was a Bill the value of which depended entirely upon its details, and those details could only be considered and elucidated and the weak points discovered during discussion in Committee. He held that the Bill was of such far-reaching importance that the House of Commons was bound to look with jealousy at every corner of it in order to see exactly what it was doing; and that could only be done by allowing a free and unfettered Committee stage. He begged to move.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL seconded the Amendment. He said that if this had been a Bill to which they objected on principle there might have been some kind of excuse for the Resolution. But they on that side of the House were only desirous to improve the Bill, as was shown by the number of Amendments which had been put down. Therefore, it seemed to him that the Government were very ill-advised in not giving them time to discuss details and to improve what they themselves had described as a hastily considered measure. Many of the Amendments had been brought before hon. Members by representatives of the great friendly societies, but they would be entirely shut out from the debate if the Government Resolution were carried. The Government seemed to be afraid of discussing the Amendments in Committee. He heartily supported the Amendment of his hon. friend, and hoped that it would be pressed to a division in order to show that the Government were treating the House in a manner which did not in any way conduce to the credit and honour of that Assembly.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 1, to leave out the words 'Committee stage.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale) said that if he were under the impression that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Norwood was seriously placed on the Paper, he would feel it his duty to point out that the hon. Member had left other words in the Resolution which would still apply to the Committee; but as the hon. Gentleman had frankly admitted that the Amendment was not seriously intended, but was, in effect, the rejection of the whole Resolution, he need not pursue the particular point which would have arisen if he were to treat the Amendment seriously. The hon. Member had asked the Government whether they in fact thought that such a Resolution as this for the conduct of the Bill was necessary. The Government thought it not only necessary but desirable; desirable, in his view, in order to preserve the dignity of discussion in this House, and for the allocation of sufficient time for the various clauses of the Bill. The hon. Member said that this was mainly a Committee Bill; but that could be said of every measure introduced in the House. But the House had had the advantage of what was undoubtedly a Committee discussion during the whole of the Second Reading, and hon. Members were very well aware of most, if not all, of the points that would be likely to be taken in Committee. He believed that the time allocated was amply sufficient for the length of the Bill and the subjects likely to be discussed. Last year the Small Holdings Bill, which went up to Grand Committee, was four times as long as this Bill, was of a very different character, and excited a great deal of interest. It might have encountered violent opposition, yet it only occupied Grand Committee sixteen days, and according to that calculation four days should be sufficient for the present measure. But a day in Grand Committee was only equal to half a day in the House, so that if eight days were enough for the Small Holdings Bill, two would be enough for the present one. The hon. Gentleman would be convinced on second thoughts of the generosity of the Government in allowing five days for this Bill, which was a short one, though it undoubtedly raised some points of material interest.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said he did not know whether it was worth while pursuing the right hon. Gentleman's analogy between the Bill of last year and that now before the House, but he pointed out that the former only cost the State £100,000 in two years, whereas the present Bill would cost £7,500,000 annually. However detailed the discussion was on the Second Reading stage, it could never replace a full Committee discussion. When they broke new ground, as this Bill did, it was a commonplace of Parliamentary life that the Government draftsman looked at the thing from a purely legal point of view and did not foresee the hundred human and personal contingencies that would arise. They would not go far with one of the Amendments before scores of human, acute problems, never thought of on the Second Reading, would arise. The Government, in the first place, had not made up its mind about the sliding scale. There was a passage in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer which indicated—though he fancied it was denied by the Prime Minister afterwards—that the Government was not averse to grafting on this scheme some contributory help, but if hon. Members desired to raise that point on the Committee stage, they could not do so unless they knew whether the right hon. Gentleman could finance it. They could, of course, move to reduce the 5s. pension.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I do not think so.

LORD BALCARRES said that undoubtedly they could raise the whole financial question by moving to reduce the pension from 5s. to 4s. 6d. That was a point, however, upon which the Government did not seem to intend to have the guidance of the House of Commons. Another point which might be raised was the whole bearing of this Bill on the Poor Law problem. They were now anticipating the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. What was the right hon. Gentleman's position in that matter? He could not let the House in Committee so discuss it from the point of view of the Poor Law. Three or four important Amendments on that point could not be discussed at all, and the whole bearing of this question, from the point of view of the Poor Law, would not be discussed, because it could not be reached in the five days. That was one question of vital importance. Another question which would be cut out by this drastic procedure was the effect of this measure on existing friendly societies. He did not think that could come on in any Amendment which had the slightest chance of being discussed. It was suggested that it had all been thrashed out in Second Reading. Nothing of the kind. There had been no decision, and they had received no guidance. They had asked for a Report as to the friendly societies, and it was a most astonishing thing that although inquiries were made in January last the right hon. Gentleman could not, when proposing this closure Resolution, even now tell them what the answer to his inquiries was. Unless upon this question the guillotine could be suspended, or large concessions were made by the Government in the number of days, they would never reach the question of the friendly societies. Another thing which would come up for discussion was the fact that this Bill was going to reduce the wages of a certain class of labourer over sixty-five years of age. In the ordinary course that would come up in the form of a new clause, but he doubted whether to propose a new clause. The closure in the Committee stage would prevent it; still it ought to be discussed. All these important points were going to be excluded from discussion. The greatest example recently of rushing a Bill through under the guillotine was afforded by the Territorial Army scheme, which had in consequence been a ghastly failure. That was a concrete example of the danger of rushing a Bill through the Committee stage under the guillotine. The result was that the House of Commons did not consider the effect of the word "enlistment," and ridiculous difficulties arose in consequence. A few hours discussion would have put the whole thing right. The same thing would occur here in an aggravated form. Every commitment the House made under this Bill would be multiplied five or ten-fold by hon. Members who desired the pension age to be reduced to sixty-five. He had opposed nearly every guillotine Resolution moved in this House since he had been a Member of it. He certainly voted for the Resolution of 1892, after the measure affected had been under discussion in Committee for thirty-two days, but the principle put forward to-day was far more drastic than any previous proposal, because it was not made under pressure. Every Member had stated that this was necessary in order that the business of the House might be got through, but there was a fallacy underlying those words. It was not the work of the House to turn out a certain number of Acts of Parliament each year, but to consider freely and fully a certain number of ideas. Did the right hon. Gentleman contend that he would have considered five days sufficient for the discussion of the Committee stage of this Bill if it had not been for the fact that there was also a Licensing Bill, an Education Bill, and many other Bills to be got through? The time given by this Resolution was not measured by the importance of the Bill, but by the exigencies of the other measures before the House. It was a dangerous precedent to restrict to five days the Committee stage of a Bill which involved a national expenditure of £7,500,000. If that was enough then one would think four days would be sufficient in which to discuss a measure of tariff reform by which the country would gain or lose a similar amount of money. He protested strongly against the Committee stage being hurried in this way. Personally he would have preferred that the Second Reading should have been cut down and another day given to the Committee stage, and he would be prepared to surrender the Third Reading stage in order that further time should be given to the Committee stage. The right hon. Gentleman must admit that the ground had been cut from under his feet when he claimed that it lay with him to say what the discussion should be. The Government did not know its own views upon the subject. The time to be given to any particular clause varied from minute to minute, and no one could say how far it should be restricted. If this Amendment went to a division he should certainly support it.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) thought the House had reason to complain of the attitude which had been adopted by the First Commissioner of Works, who refused to consider this Amendment seriously because the consequential Amendments to it had not also been put down. But if they once got the main Amendment it would be easy enough to pass the consequential Amendments. "Five days" was the exact number given to the Report stage of the Workmen's Compensation Bill of 1907. That was a Bill designed to help the workers of this country and it achieved its purpose. The Second Reading was not objected to, but it was a Bill that involved some intricate discussion in Committee, a stage which took twelve days. That was a proper time to give to the discussion of such a Bill, and it was the time that ought to be given to this Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman had conceded five days for the Report stage he would have done a great deal to conciliate hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House. If the First Commissioner was present, he would ask the right hon. Gentleman to apply to this Bill the same good judgment that he had applied to the reform of Constitution Hill, the Marble Arch, and the smoking accommodation in the House of Commons. The Opposition had no objection to a good Old-Age Pensions Bill; they wanted one. They knew, however, that this Resolution was not designed in the interests of this Bill, but in the interests of others, and they objected that the poor should be made to suffer in order that the Government might confiscate licensed property and make coal dearer by their legislation.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 251; Noes, 58. (Division List No. 120.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd)
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt. Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.)
Dillon, John
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Esslemont, George Birnie

Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grove, Archibald
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry

Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, Sir G Scott (Bradf'rd
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.

Russell, T. W.
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert(Staffs, N. W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,David Alfred(Merthyr)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Thorne, G.R. (Wolverhampton)
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward,John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Acland-Hood,Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Barrie H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Coates, Major E.F. (Lewisham)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Captain James (Down,E.)
Cross, Alexander
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan,Robert(Lanark,Govan)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch,Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
King,Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Pease,HerbertPike(Darlington)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool,Walton)
Stanier, Beville
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Bowles and Sir Henry CRAIK.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) moved to insert after the first paragraph the following words: "It shall be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. A. Henderson, and three other Members of long experience to be chosen by them with the assent of Mr. Speaker, to allot to the remaining stages of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, within one week, such periods as they shall think desirable, and, failing any such allotment, the following provisions shall have effect." The House would see that his proposal was put forward as an alternative to that of the Government. The essential differenec between the two proposals was that, whereas the proposal of the Resolution was in effect that the Government should settle what time was to be given to the different stages of the Bill, his proposal was that the time should be left to be discussed and settled by a Committee which from its elements had at any rate some guarantee of impartiality. He quite agreed that formally the Government submitted the matter to the House, but it was well known that in point of fact the House would not differ from the Government. The hon. Member for Bradford in his very interesting speech described the members of the majority as somewhat in the nature of sheep.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: He said both Parties.

LORD R. CECIL said the hon. Member did, but it would not make any difference what his Party did, because they would be outvoted by the sheep on the other side of the House. Everybody knew that the hon. Members on the other side of the House did as their Whips told them. The hon. Member for Bradford had pointed out that in order to avoid any misgivings they abstained from entering the Chamber until the division took place so that their minds might not be affected by the discussion. He thought they were wise. The Government proposal was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in a speech upon which he would with great respect congratulate him, because it seemed to him exactly fitted to the Party he led, and, therefore, to the greater part of his audience. He must have known that it was almost destitute of sound argument. What was in fact the main argument upon which he relied? He said that the Government knew from the course of discussion on the Second Reading not only how long the discussion in Committee ought to take, but every single topic in which the Committee ought to take an interest. He pointed out three points which ought to be discussed on Clauses 1 and 2. That was rather curious, because it was so characteristic of the Government that he left out some of the most important questions that arose on those clauses. He said that the only questions worth discussing were whether the scheme should be contributory or non-contributory, which he thought had been discussed, what should be the age of the beneficiary, and whether or not there should be a sliding scale. He left out several matters of the highest importance which arose on the clauses. There was the question whether the pension should be the grant of a gift or the fulfilment of a right. That was an important question which ought and he hoped would be discussed. Then there was the question which had been mentioned and was raised by several Amendments already on the Paper, viz., the limitation of the amount paid to couples living in the same house.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I did mention that.

Lord R. CECIL said the right hon. Gentleman stated that there were three things to be discussed; if this question were included there would be four. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had really destroyed his own contention. He had stated that if he and his friends had the duty of constructing Amendments to the Bill the discussion would without any obstruction, last not five days but until August, and yet he said that five days were sufficient. In his second speech the right hon. Gentleman relied broadly on the argument that the great thing to do was to make the guillotine a part of the regular procedure of the House, that when that was done all parties would agree to work it in what he regarded as the proper way in which it should work, and that then only the important questions would be discussed on the Amendments. But the right hon. Gentleman forgot that what seemed an important question to one section of the House was not an important question to another section. Members below the gangway would discuss the Bill from one point of view, and Members above the gangway from another. He did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer could really have been serious in supposing that even the regular employment of the guillotine could ever conduce to the true, businesslike, and vigorous discussion of the details o a measure. He thought the hon. Member for Bradford was much nearer the mark, and he was amazed that the Liberal Party had not taken what he had said more to heart. The hon. Member had pointed out the gradual decay of the House of Commons, and speaking with transparent sincerity, had emphasised, the fact that every year the House of Commons had less control over the national business of the country, and that not only was that true of the House as a whole, but even more true of individual Members of the House and particularly of private Members. He had pointed out the very serious result that that was certain to produce upon, in the first place, the estimation and ultimately the constitutional position of the House. He had always thought that that was by far the most serious aspect of this question of the procedure of the House. Unless something could be done to restore the reputation of the House in the country it was perfectly certain that, sooner or later, the House would lose, first, its constitutional position and then its power to transact the business of the country, because it was quite evident that if hon. Members were to be reduced to the position of Parliamentary machines, if they were to do nothing but register the decrees of the Cabinet, they would not get gentlemen to come from other professions to enter the House and give their time to the public service. That was really a matter of urgent importance to every Member of the House, and he thought the most urgent question before the country at this moment was to consider what, if anything, could be done to restore to the House of Commons its ancient reputation. He had a very strong opinion as to what was the main cause of the decay of the reputation of the House, and he believed it was one which was very much increased by such a Motion as the present. It was the undue severity of Party discipline. He believed it was absolutely fatal to give the Government, as they did by a Resolution of this kind, absolute control of legislation. It was quite plain that the great vice of such a Resolution was that it really gave control of the details of a Bill to the Government. He might instance the case of the Territorial Army. There was an Amendment on the Paper, with which he, personally, did not agree, in the name of one of the Labour Members. It was well known that it would give the Government a great deal of trouble. It was never discussed, and by the operation of the guillotine Resolution it was not even divided upon. That was one of the great advantages, from the point of view of the Government, that practically such procedure freed them from any effective criticism. If that was so, this kind of procedure did exactly what he deplored, namely, it increased the power of the executive over individual private Members. He was much struck in the debate of the previous night by the courteous references of the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Preston. He looked on him as a kind of prehistoric animal, a survival from the past, a Member who dared to get up in his place and criticise the Government. He treated it amid the cheers of hon. Members opposite as an extraordinary freak of Parliamentary life. That was exceedingly symptomatic of the present condition of affairs, and though he did not hope that anything he could say would move hon. Members opposite to free themselves from the slavery under which they existed, yet there it was. If hon. Members were not prepared to strike a blow for freedom the House of Commons would suffer very severely from proposals of this kind. It might be asked how the Amendment dealt with the difficulty. He agreed that it was a relatively small remedy for so great an evil, but he thought it was a step in the right direction. His proposal was to take the matter out of the hands of the Government altogether, and put it in the hands of an independent committee. He did not think the nomination of a committee by the Committee of Selection would meet the case. He thought they could not get an independent committee in that way, but if they took the Leaders of the four parties in the House, made them responsible to the House for settling business, and allowed them to suggest three other gentlemen who were best qualified to exercise an impartial judgment, and whom they would select with the assent of the Speaker, then there would be some chance of getting an impartial decision. Hon. Members would probably agree that the House of Commons no longer occupied the position in the public eye that it did some years ago. He thought there could be no doubt about it, for what papers reported discussions in the House now? As far as he knew, there was only one which made any attempt to do so, and that was a paper which, owing to its price, did not circulate freely among the people of the country. The most widely-read papers gave, not a report, but a picturesque sketch of the debates. The House of Commons no longer occupied that position of authority and respect that it did twenty years ago. He was quite sure that if it did occupy that position, it would not occupy it long. It was bound to deteriorate in popular estimation if it was merely there not to discuss and determine the affairs of the State, but to register the decrees of the Cabinet. He begged to move.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry), in seconding the Amendment, said he was one of those who did not complain that they gave too little time to discussion, but his complaint was that the time given was very badly arranged if it was intended to secure the best expression of opinions and the best debates on different subjects. The Amendment under discussion did not entail any longer time than the course proposed by the Government. The difference was that the mover of the Amendment objected to the allocation of the time being left to one party, and suggested that it should be left to a small committee of the leaders of all parties, supported by three independent Members selected by those four leaders. That would secure that the particular subjects which most required discussion would receive it, and for that reason he seconded the Amendment. He had heard only two arguments in favour of the course now being taken. The First Commissioner of Works, who made a speech and rushed out before anyone had an opportunity of answering him, compared the time-table suggested for this Bill with the Small Holdings Bill which he conducted through the House last year, and said that one great difference between the two was that this Bill gave somebody something, whereas the Small Holdings Bill rather took something away from somebody. He thought that that was the first time the right hon. Gentleman had described the Bill in such terms, because he had always understood that the Small Holdings Bill had been claimed by hon. Members opposite as a great boon to the agricultural classes. They had been told that the reason for this Resolution was that the Government knew what everybody in the House of Commons wanted to discuss. Many hon. Gentlemen opposite had spoken very eloquently on the tied-house system. Although many hon. Members had never tasted a glass of beer in their lives and thought it very wrong to do so, yet they complained that the public could not obtain a particular quality of beer, and that public-houses were tied to saw-dust and spittoons. Now the Government had acquired temporary possession of the House of Commons, and they were tying it as tight as ever anybody had tied a public-house. They were tying the House of Commons, not only in regard to the discussion of their particular measures, but also in reference to Amendments.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 3, after the word 'manner,' to insert the words 'It shall be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. A. Henderson, and three other Members of long experience to be chosen by them with the assent of Mr. Speaker, to allot to the remaining stages of the Old-age Pensions Bill, within one week, such periods as they shall think desirable, and, failing any such allotment, the following provisions shall have effect.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he had listened to the eloquent speech of the noble Lord because it reminded him of a number of speeches he himself made on the same subject when the late Government were in office. He was almost inclined to think that the noble Lord had been reading those speeches. He agreed that for many years the House of Commons had been falling in the estimation of the people, who were taking less interest in its proceedings. During the fifteen years which the present Leader of the Opposition led this House he constantly applied Closure Resolutions. [Opposition cries of "No."] The right hon. Gentleman constantly introduced the Closure in his attempt to put down Ireland, and they would never have had closure in the House of Commons but for Irish coercion. At that time the Irish Party warned the Government that the habit of introducing closure to pass coercion Bills for Ireland would eat into the heart of the House, and it had done so. The evil grew, but it grew more common under the administration of the Leader of the Opposition. Over and over again the Nationalists prophesied that when a Radical Government came into power they would improve on the example which had been set them. At that time they were laughed at, and he was amazed that hon. Members did not see how inevitable the fulfilment of that prophecy was. The Conservative Party were never very eager for legislation, and consequently, if they brought in closure and guillotine Resolutions, why should they be surprised if a Radical Government, whose trouble always was that they had great arrears of legislation to carry through, improved upon their example and by force of circumstances were forced to go further in regard to the closure? Until some great fundamental and revolutionary change was made in their system such Resolutions would continue to be a necessity. The noble Lord had alluded to the growing power of the Executive Government. That was a constant complaint on that side of the House during the last Administration, under which the curtailing of the power and influence of private Members was more marked than it had ever been before during the twenty-five years he had sat in the House. The noble Lord in his Amendment had proposed an alternative. It was a proposal to transfer the whole question of the limitation of debate to an independent committee. That proposal had been made over and over again, and it had been debated and fully considered in the House. It was a most remarkable thing that the leaders of different Governments had again and again expressed their desire to see that proposition carried out, but no doubt the reason was that they did not like the abuse which was poured upon their heads when they submitted closure Resolutions to the House. He noticed that the present Prime Minister had expressed a desire that an arrangement similar to that which was now under discussion should be carried into effect. Personally, he was opposed to anything of the kind. He contended that they could not conduct the business of the House unless the responsibility was fixed upon the Treasury Bench. They could not transfer the responsibility from the Government or from the head of the Government to any Committee. The thing was absurd and impossible. So long as the present system continued the responsibility must rest with the Leader of the House, and they must, if necessary, criticise his methods. It never would be possible to solve this problem by transferring to an independent Committee the allocation of the time to be allotted to different measures. Whenever a responsible Minister brought in a Resolution of this character, he would always be marked out for a certain amount of abuse. A suggestion was made that a Committee should be appointed to sort out the Amendments to be discussed. Was there ever such a monstrous interference with one of the few remaining rights of private Members? That Committee might take a totally different view of the importance of Amendments from that taken by the Members who gave notice of them, or by a majority of the Members of the House. He would rather take his chance under the present system than submit his Amendments to an irresponsible Committee who would be, like the Committee of Selection, entirely removed from the criticism of the House. This was one of the most important questions to which the House could devote its attention in the future, and he could assure the noble Lord that he was on a false track if he thought that it could be solved by the Amendment which he had proposed.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE thought the hon. Member had completely answered the case submitted by the noble Lord. These suggestions had been put forward from time to time. He was under the impression that the Leader of the Opposition had made similar suggestions in the course of previous discussions. The right hon. Gentleman rather repudiated the suggestion when he said so, but he had made inquiries on the subject, and he thought the right hon. Gentleman would find that he had done so. But these were not suggestions to be considered in connection with a Motion of the kind now before the House. All suggestions for the improvement of procedure had to be seriously considered on their merits, but he thought that no hon. Member of long experience would be prepared to undertake the responsibility of submitting a scheme of this kind as a means of permanently amending their procedure. The point had been considered by one or two Committees and they had decided against it. Hon. Members had to remember that once this arrangement was introduced as a precedent it would not be departed from. The Committee would not be established merely for one Bill; it would be established for all Bills. No doubt the Government of the day would be delighted to be relieved of the burden of responsibility. On such a Committee the Government, it would be admitted, must have a majority.

Lord R. CECIL said that by his proposal he hoped the House would secure a Committee which would not be one on which the Government would have a majority in the sense in which it had a majority in the House. It would be an independent Committee.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the noble Lord, after all, knew enough about the House to know that on a Committee of this kind the Government must either have a majority or they must not. If the Government had not a majority on the Committee, then the Government would not depend upon it. It should not be forgotten that the Government were primarily responsible for the conduct of public business, and it was impossible for them to part with that responsibility if they really aspired to direct the business of the House. Time was an essential element. Once a Government parted with the control of the time of the House they lost the control of the business of the House. He would hesitate before he recommended the House under any conditions to accept a suggestion of this character. In any case the present was not the time to consider it. He would not follow the noble Lord into a discussion as to the reputation of the House of Commons. The noble Lord thought that since he entered the House of Commons it had gone down considerably in reputation. If the noble Lord would allow him to say so, that was really not the case. He thought that no one who had been sitting in the House for some years would say so. He was sure the Leader of the Opposition would not give that testimony.

LORD R. CECIL said it was not the Members of the House of Commons who were the best judges. It was the opinion outside of the House of Commons.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was not sure that an experienced Member of the House of Commons who, like the Leader of the Opposition, had sat in six or eight Parliaments, would not be as good a judge as any member of the outside public. The Leader of the Opposition had not long ago declared that he thought the general character of the representation was improving. From the business point of view Parliament had certainly improved. There was much more work done than ever before, and it was done with more knowledge of the practical affairs of the nation than was the case thirty or forty years ago. Each succeeding Parliament contained a large number of men who had this practical knowledge. The Press, too, was certainly giving more attention to its proceedings. Nothing, however, would do more to lower Parliament in the estimation of the nation than the idea that Parliament could not get through its legislation. It was for that reason they should get the present Resolution passed.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) thought the right hon. Gentleman was rather confusing quantity with quality. Quantity was not the only test. There could be no two opinions that work done under the pressure of the guillotine could not be done as well as when there was freedom from that kind of control. A great many Amendments were never debated, and it was in the experience of everybody in the House that the Government themselves had put into Bills Amendment after Amendment without having the opportunity of explaining why they were introduced. That was not a satisfactory way of legislating. The statement that they did more work was not in itself sufficient to show that modern Parliaments were better than those of former times. At the same time he found himself in this position, that while he agreed with a great part of the speech made by his noble friend, he was not able to agree with his remedy for the evil complained of—an evil which they all acknowledged. It was admitted that for the proposal of the Government there was practically no support found from hon. Gentlemen on their own benches, and what little support was given was with limitations and criticisms which were recognised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his speech. What they were now doing was discussing a proposal which would largely abbreviate debate on the details of the Bill, which would permit not free and unfettered discussion, but only discussion at the dictation of the Government He agreed that if the Government were to lose the control of the time of the House it would be impossible to carry on the business of the Government. His noble friend felt more strongly now than he would do a few years hence the case of the private Member. Undoubtedly the part which the private Member took in legislation and the work of the House of Commons was far less now than before these closure Resolutions were introduced. His noble friend, however, was not wedded to a particular form or precise method of procedure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his earlier speech—the importance of which could not be exaggerated—had told them that the procedure complained of was the natural outcome of what had taken place in the House; that it was of a progressive character; that they had gone on from one thing to another, step by step, till they had arrived at the point when closure proposals were made before they knew what Amendments were to be submitted, and even before the Second Reading of the Bill had been agreed to. Surely that announcement meant that this practice had become part of their regular procedure. Hitherto it had been the practice of Governments to wait for some indication of determined opposition before putting down a guillotine Motion. For the first time this Motion had been put down as part of the ordinary procedure of Parliament, before even the Second Reading was carried, before it was possible to put Amendments on the Paper. If this change were to be permanent some general reconsideration of the procedure of the House was necessary. The Unionist Government not only were not open to the charge of using the guillotine with more frequency than their opponents, but in every case they had allowed some time before proposing the Motion. They had waited till they had some opportunity of knowing what the Amendments were and what the attitude of the Opposition was. If a guillotine Motion accompanying a Second Reading was to become part of the oridnary procedure of the House it would certainly be necessary to consider whether some method could not be devised by which greater regard would be shown for the rights of minorities and private Members than was shown in the Motion of the Government.

*MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said he wished to intervene for a moment because of the terms of the Motion of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone. Everyone admitted that they would like to see something done by which they could get at the practical opinion of the House. The noble Lord suggested a Select Committee, consisting of the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Irish Party, and the Leader of the Labour Party; but he took no notice whatever of the unofficial Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Members or even of the Chairman of the Welsh Party. The noble Lord left it to the Speaker to nominate three Members to represent the other Parties on the Committee to regulate the business of the House. He knew that the noble Lord had said that the Scottish Liberal Members were not fully qualified to conduct the affairs of Scotland. For his part, after twenty-three years experience, off and on, as a Member of the House, he said that whatever they did in the way of devolution, until devolution came they would never set the House absolutely free to conduct Imperial business. He did not, of course, suppose that the noble Lord meant it, but in drafting his Amendment there appeared to be an implied insult to Scotland and Wales, and that Scotland and Wales should not be equally regarded with Ireland and the Labour Party as worthy of similar consideration.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said that the discussion had applied to the closure generally, and not to the particular proposal put forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The hon. Member for East Mayo and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had ignored the fact that his noble friend's Amendment was intended to deal with a situation which did not exist in the last Parliament, and, therefore, any reference to what had been done by his right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition was entirely out of place. Though he sympathised with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the hon. Member for East Mayo in the unfortunate position in which they now found themselves of contradicting their own utterances in the last Parliament, he thought they had brought that position on themselves. They were now dealing with an Amendment to a Resolution which was entirely novel. The object of the Government in opposing the Amendment could only be considered as part of the true policy and method of dealing with the Bill. It was on a piece with the Resolution brought forward last session with regard to another place. In every case the Government tried to attain the maximum of legislation with the minimum of trouble. Their whole attitude during the present Parliament had been to give themselves as little trouble as possible. Their Bills were brought forward in such a way that they enabled the machine to do the work and the man who controlled the machine to do as little as possible. That was part of their policy when they brought their private secretaries on to the floor of the House. It gave them more time outside the House and enabled them to neglect their duties inside. Before this session they had never been regaled with the spectacle of Cabinet Ministers speaking at bye-elections, writing magazine articles, or giving recitations at smoking concerts. He noticed that when the noble Lord who moved the Amendment stated in the course of his speech that he thought it was agreed on all sides that the prestige of the House had suffered during the last twenty years, the right hon. Gentleman neither assented nor dissented, but later on the right hon. Gentleman said he did not know that the prestige of the House had suffered, but that at any rate it was generally conceded that far more interest was taken in the deliberations of the present Parliament than in those of its predecessors. That was no doubt true, but the interest taken was the painful interest taken by those who were to suffer in the guillotine, the painful interest taken in an execution by the man who was going to be hanged. The present Government had done more harm than any other Government that ever existed, and it was not hard to see why this languid interest was taken in their proceedings. The whole of their acts had been in restriction of the liberties of the House. The right hon. Gentleman made one curiously undemocratic remark in the course of his speech as to what should be the duty of the Government. If carried to its logical conclusion the effect would be to leave in the hands of the Government not only all the power of controlling legislation, but all the power of considering it. The right hon. Gentleman's suggestion was that the House being what it was, human nature being what it was, and the Government being in the position in which they were, it was not safe to leave to the House any duties whatever. What the right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, would like to see would be the whole of the House except the two Front Benches removed, and the whole of the business carried on by themselves and Members of the Front Opposition Bench. That might or might not be a good thing; the business of the House might be carried on perhaps in a better way. But at all events the House should know what the policy of the Government was. If that was the policy he did not see why the right hon. Gentleman wanted so many of his friends returned to Parliament. Their presence was a superfluity and their speeches more than a superfluity. As a humble private Member he thought the time had come when some kind of league should be formed to protect from the ravages of the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues—and after the speech of his right hon. friend the Member for South Dublin he was afraid he must also say from the ravages of some right hon. Gentlemen on that side—the rapidly decreasing liberties of that House. There was need for some stand to be taken against the encroachments upon their liberties; there was need for the position to be considered as a whole. He hoped the House before coming to a decision on the Amendment of his noble friend would consider it from the point of view of the House as a whole, and not merely from the point of convenience of this or any other Government.

*MR. JOWETT said that having troubled the House during the earlier part of the day when the main Resolution was under discussion he would not have ventured to intervene again had it not been for the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of the hon. Member for Mayo. The proposal now before the House was not exactly that which he himself should have made. In his opinion, any Committee appointed should have placed upon it the duty of considering not merely how the Bill should be divided into sections and what amount of time should be allotted to each, but also that of placing the Amendments in their order of importance. That position had been contested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the hon. Member for Mayo. But what was the alternative? It was to go on as they had been going on far too long. Nobody could say that the present position was satisfactory. So far from being satisfactory, it in many cases amounted almost to a disgrace. It was perfectly well known that very important Amendments on important Bills passed during the present Parliament had never been considered, and that so far as private Members' Amendments were concerned some had not even been voted upon. An instance occurred to him. An Amendment with which he himself did not agree, and against which he should have voted, was put down to the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill for the institution of some system of universal military training. It was never discussed and never voted upon. In the case of the Education Bill of 1906, also many very important proposals for amending the Bill were never voted upon by the House. He would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether that was anything to be proud of. Surely some change was needed. Everybody knew that the guillotine worked out in this fashion. Let them be as careful as they would in allotting the time beforehand, there was nothing to prevent Members, if they chose, spending the major part of that valuable time discussing Amendments of minor importance and leaving the main issues to be closured at the finish. That was the point. How were they to get out of the difficulty? Notwithstanding all that had been said with great force by the hon. Member for Mayo, he thought there was more hope in the suggestion to appoint a committee to sort out and classify amendments in the order of their relative importance than the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared to grant. It would at least give Members representing different sections of the House an opportunity of putting forward their claim to have discussed the particular issues in which they were interested. In that way they would have better security than they had had hitherto. He was sorry that in a matter of this kind they could not look for the support of the Nationalist Party. They looked at all these questions affecting the business arrangements and procedure of the House of Commons from an entirely different point of view from that taken by other Members. The chief end and aim of their Parliamentary campaign was to get back to their own homeland and plant there a Parliament to represent their own people. Feeling that, they were not concerned to make our Parliamentary machine work easier. He did not believe there had ever been a suggestion for altering the procedure of the House of Commons in a way likely to give better results and get business through quicker against which they had not protested. He did not blame them; it was their business here. They were chiefly interested in getting a National Parliament established on College Green in Dublin. When they got that he imagned they would split up into parties, just the same as we did in England, and he should be surprised if the hon. Member for Mayo at the Treasury Bench of an Irish Parliament did not seek to establish and maintain executive power against democratic intervention. For his part he thought that they should not be afraid of extending democratic principles; and therefore he thought that Members of the House of Commons should have more power to determine the business of the House of Commons, and everything relating to the business of the country. There was one principle which he thought the Ministerial and Front Opposition Benches held in common, and that was that the power over the business of the House of Commons and of determining what legislation should have precedence should rest with His Majesty's Ministers. He disputed that principle. It should rest with the House of Commons itself—with the representatives of the people. It was because he thought a Committee of the kind suggested would restore to the House of Commons that power which Ministers now wrongly and mischievously possessed that he supported the Amendment, though it must be understood that the Committee he desired was one differently constituted and intended for a larger purpose than was contemplated in the Amendment under consideration.

*Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said he was a believer in heredity, and he believed the noble Lord had benefited by heredity, and that his name would bear more weight with the House than that of an ordinary average private Member. Those who felt strongly that some reform of the procedure of the House was required had a right to make themselves heard even though young Members. There was a large reform required, and it could be given practically by good sensible, business-like men on the front benches putting their heads together and arranging how Bills should be carried through. It was evident to those who gave consideration to the matter that a very important Bill might not be at all a complex Bill, and the Leaders on both sides might arrange who were to speak and who should follow the example of the author of the shortest speech on record, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke." If hon. Members would only say "I say ditto," instead of taking up time in order to find their remarks in *The Times*, *Punch*, and the local papers, and only speak when they had something new and original to say, a great economy of time would result. There were four parties in the House. Some desired to see a fifth, a Scottish Party. Scotland went heartily with England in very many things, but he did not desire to see a separate Scottish Party in that House. He would let the Scotsman support the sensible Englishman, the sensible Irishman, and the sensible Welshman. It certainly gave him pain to listen to the hon. Member for East Mayo, for whom he had a great respect and sincere regard, when he said that this Parliament could never do justice to Ireland.

Mr. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I never said that, but I believe it firmly.

*Mr. R. DUNCAN said that sitting below the hon. Member there was a distinct infusion of new blood into Parliament, and these men he knew meant business. They called themselves, and thought themselves, representatives of the workers, and so far as they were representatives of the workers they ought to have their respect;—but if they went there as representatives of the loafers and spongers they ought not; and if they looked on Members above the gangway as persons who ought not to be in Parliament he hoped they would not get that influence to which they aspired.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. Member to address himself to the Amendment.

*Mr. R. DUNCAN said the whole debate had taken the line of the general principle involved in a reform of the general procedure in Parliament. Having said all he desired to say he only wished to express his sense of the service the noble Lord had done the House by bringing the subject forward.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he desired to say a word or two upon this Amendment. He thought his noble friend had done a service in making a suggestion which, however impracticable in itself, at all events brought before the House the real difficulties of the situation. But if his noble friend asked him by name to take part in an allocation of the amount of time to be given respectively to all the Amendments upon this complicated Bill, he must frankly say that that was a task beyond his powers and one which would involve a degree of study which he had not time to give, and a degree of impartiality which he had no right to claim. He would like to make one more observation of a general character. It might be possible—he did not say it was—to find a tribunal, drawn from all sides of the House, which should decide if a given time, say, ten days, were allowed, how that ten days should be allotted. But he did not see how any Committee could decide that ten days should be the limit, because how could power be given to any Committee to determine what Bills should be brought forward and how the time of the session should be allotted? It must be the Government who must determine what Bills were to be brought in and how the time should be distributed. This was a question to which he had given a good deal of consideration, but although his noble friend's Amendment was based upon a view which ultimately might provide some machinery by which the present difficulty could be overcome, he did not think the machinery his noble friend had proposed in this Amendment was practicable, and, speaking for himself, he felt wholly incapable of carrying out the functions which the noble Lord had honoured him by suggesting he should undertake.

LORD R. CECIL said that in view of the difficulties which had been pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition and the support which had been given to the object he had in view he thought it would be improper to ask the House to divide, and he asked leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. STUART WORTLEY moved an Amendment to prevent Thursdays from being included in the allotted days, the object being to preserve intact the system set up by the Supply rule.

Amendment proposed—

> "In line 4, after the word 'days,' to insert the words 'not being Thursdays.'"—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. HARCOURT said it was not the intention of the Government to take the Committee and Report stage of this Bill on a Thursday, but it would not be to the general convenience of the House to tie them upon this point absolutely. The Government would give the usual number of days for Supply. It might, however, be for the general convenience of the Opposition as well as the Government that a stage should be completed on a Thursday, and another day allotted to Supply.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said his right hon. friend had asked him to say that in view of the general statement of the intention of the Government he would not press his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. STUART WORTLEY moved an Amendment which would have given the time allotted to Clauses 1 and 2 to Subsections 1 and 2 of Clause 1. On these Subsections four questions of the first magnitude arose—universal pensions, the rate of pension, the age at which it should be payable, and the payment to married couples. Those were all subjects of the first magnitude, and the time laid down in his Amendment was the least which the Government ought to allow.

Amendment proposed—

> "In line 5, to leave out the words 'Clauses 1 and 2,' and insert the words 'Subsections 1 and 2 of Clause 1.'"—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. HARCOURT opposed the Amendment on the ground that the five days had already been agreed to, and the reconstruction of the whole of the timetable would be involved in the Amendment. He thought the House generally would be put to great inconvenience if the alteration suggested in the Amendment were made, because the time would be seriously limited upon other parts of Clauses 1 and 2.

SIR F. BANBURY said the most important parts of Clauses 1 and 2 were the subsections which his right hon. friend wished to have discussed at length. The Amendment would give them reasonable time to discuss the most important parts of the Bill.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 311; Noes, 99. (Division List No. 121.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devnp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T. (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William

Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm.J. (S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,CH(Sussex,E.Grinst'd)
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar,Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W H(St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth,R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,NE.)
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Herbert,T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor (Swansea)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William(Carnarvonshire)
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb,Edmund G. (Leominster)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea,Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever,A. Levy (Essex,Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald,J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs)
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J.Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J.Wyrford(Pembroke
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea,Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.

Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Thorne,G.R. (Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walters, John Tudor

Walton, Joseph
Ward,John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander

Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh.,N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G.(Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies,David(MontgomeryCo.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur

Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch,Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Col. Charles W.(Evesham
Long,Rt Hn. Walter(Dublin,S.)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens

Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley George D.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'dUniv.
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Main Question again proposed.

And, it being after Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Speaker proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The House divided:—Ayes, 308; Noes, 98. (Division List No. 122.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton

Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.

Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John

Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F.(Lancs., Leigh,
Brunner,Rt HnSirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(Montgomery Co)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan,J.Lloyd(Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk,Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps,J.Wynford (Pembroke
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell(Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann,SirC.E.(Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel

Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarthen
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh., N)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W.T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham.
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Question put accordingly.

The House divided—Ayes, 306; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 123.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon

Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,SirJ.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, SirWm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,EGrinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Duncan,C. (Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L. (Rossendale)
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, R.L(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb,Edmund G.(Leominster)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, HughCecil(St.Pancras, E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A.Levy(Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(FalkirkB'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah(Down,S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson,W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea,Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)

Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick, B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset, E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt Hn. A.J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E.F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A.R.
Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J.G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W.H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Ordered, That the Committee stage, Report stage, and Third Reading of the Old-Age Pensions Bill shall be proceeded with in the following manner:—Five allotted days shall be given to the Committee stage of the Bill, and: (*a*) The proceedings on Clauses 1 and 2 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 7.30 p.m. on the second allotted day;

and (*b*) the proceedings on Clause 3 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the third allotted day; and (*c*) the proceedings on Clauses 4, 5, and 6 shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fourth allotted day; and (*d*) the proceedings on the remaining clauses of the Bill and any other matter necessary to bring the Committee stage to a conclusion shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on the fifth allotted day, and the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without Question put. One allotted day shall be given to the Report stage of the Bill, and all matters necessary to bring the Report stage to a conclusion shall be proceeded with, and the proceedings thereon brought to a conclusion, at 10.30 p.m. on that day. One allotted day shall be given to the Third Reading of the Bill, and the proceedings on that stage of the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion at 10.30 p.m. on that day, or if that day is a Friday at 5 p.m. After this Order comes into operation any day shall be considered an allotted day for the purposes of this Order on which the Bill is put down as the first Order of the Day; provided that Friday shall not be considered an allotted day except for the purposes of the Third Reading of the Bill. For the purposes of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion on an allotted day, and have not previously been brought to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman shall, at the time appointed under this Order for the conclusion of those proceedings, put forthwith the Question on any Amendment or Motion already proposed from the Chair, and shall next proceed successively to put forthwith the Question on any Amendments moved by the Government of which notice has been given, but no other Amendments, and on any Question necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded, and in the case of Government Amendments or of Government new clauses or schedules he shall put only the Question that the Amendment be made or that the clause or schedule be added to the Bill, as the case may be, and on the Committee stage of the Bill the Chairman, in the case of a series of clauses to which no notice of Amendment has been given by the Government, shall put the Question that those Clauses stand part of the Bill without putting the Question separately as respects each clause. Any Private Business which is set down for consideration at 8.15 p.m. on any allotted day shall, instead of being taken on that day as provided by the Standing Order "Time for taking Private Business," be taken after the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or under this Order for that day, and any Private Business so taken may be proceeded with, though opposed, notwithstanding any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On any day on which any proceedings are to be brought to a conclusion under this Order, proceedings for that purpose under this Order shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order relating to the Sittings of the House. On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to recommit the Bill, nor Motion for Adjournment under Standing Order 10, nor Motion to postpone a clause, shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the Question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate. Nothing in this Order shall:— (*a*) prevent any business which under this Order is to be concluded on an allotted day being proceeded with on any other day, or necessitate any allotted day or part of an allotted day being given to any such business if the business to be concluded has been otherwise disposed of; or (*b*) prevent any other business being proceeded with on any allotted day or part of an allotted day in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House after the business to be proceeded with or concluded under this Order on the allotted day or part of the allotted day has been disposed of.

Adjourned at twenty-seven minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 18*th June*, 1908.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Prosecution of Offences (Amendment).
2. Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.) Order Confirmation.
3. Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation.
4. Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1).
5. Leith Harbour and Docks Order Confirmation.
6. Metropolitan Police Provisional Order.
7. Great Western Railway (Superannuation Scheme).
8. Dublin and South Eastern Railway.
9. City of Glasgow.
10. Huddersfield Water.
11. Derby Gas.
12. Interoceanic Railway of Mexico.
13. Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society.
14. Rhymney Railway.
15. Knott End Railway.
16. Dartford Gas.
17. Great Eastern Railway (General Powers).
18. Dundalk Urban District Council.
19. Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours.
20. Argentine North Eastern Railway.
21. Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation).
22. Rochdale Corporation.
23. St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation).
24. Skegness Urban District Council.
25. Cheshire Lines Committee.
26. Llanelly Gas.
27. Great Western Railway.
28. Hull and Barnsley Railway.
29. Hurly's Divorce.

House adjourned during pleasure.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4); Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7); Central Ireland Electric Power; Padiham Urban District Council; Burnley Corporation; Criccieth Water and Improvement.

Also the Certificates that no further Standing Orders are applicable to the following Bills:—Land Drainage Provisional Order; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6); Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8).

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.].—A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—The Chairman of Committees informed the House that the opposition to the Llandudno Order was withdrawn. The Orders made on 21st May and Tuesday last respecting the commitment of the Bill to a Select Committee so far as relates to the said Order discharged.

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.]; Central Ireland Electric Power Bill; Padiham Urban District Council Bill; Burnley Corporation Bill; Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Read 2^{a}.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order) and Bill to be read 3^{a} on Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Amendment reported (according to order), and Bill to be read 3^{a} on Monday next.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to order), and committed for Tuesday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to order).

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to order), and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.—Read 2ª (according to order.)

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read 2ª (according to order), and committed.

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order), and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899) deemed to have been reported from the Committee; and to be read 3ª on Tuesday next.

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES BILL [H.L.]

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill [H.L.].—Petition against; of Clerical and Lay Members of Synod of Salisbury; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 4012. Spain (Consular District of Malaga).

No. 4014. China (Amoy).

No. 4019. France (Consular District of Bordeaux).

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ALKALI, &c., WORKS REGULATION ACT, 1906.

Fourty-fourth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works, by the Chief Inspector, proceedings during the year 1907; Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILL.

APPELLATE JURISDICTION BILL H.L.]

A Bill to amend the law with respect to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Court of Appeal in England—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 101.)

PUBLIC BILLS.

LEGISLATION BY REFERENCE.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN rose to call attention to the frequent and inconvenient use in Government Bills of reference to Acts and sections of Acts of Parliament without explanation; and to move for a Committee to inquire whether means cannot be devised, either in the way of a detailed memorandum or otherwise, for conveying to the House in plain language the effect of the proposed legislation.

The noble Earl said: My Lords, I do not think it will be necessary for me to occupy many minutes of your Lordship's time in moving the Motion which appears in my name on the Paper. Your Lordships all know, from personal experience, how difficult it is, and how increasing that difficulty is, to understand the meaning of Government Bills when they are presented. What the reason may be I do not know, but the Government draftsman of late years has been having recourse more and more to the form of drafting which is known as "legislation by reference." The consequence is that when Bills are brought up to this House it is extremely difficult, at all events for an ordinary private Peer, to ascertain the exact effect of the proposed legislation. References are made to Acts of Parliament, to parts of Acts and sections of Acts, and we are left to gather the meaning and effect of the proposed new legislation as best we can. I think we are all of opinion that that is a very great inconvenience, which ought, if possible, to be avoided.

The same complaint has been made in the other House of Parliament, latterly in connection with the Town Planning Bill. I may say that I myself had occasion to consult that Bill in reference to a measure which was before this House. I worked at it for between one and two hours, and at the end of that time I understood the Bill very little better than when I began. Perhaps it may have been the fault of my intellect. At all events I can assure your Lordships that when that Bill reaches this House, if it ever does, you will have a very tough job before you in endeavouring to understand it. Is this defect—I think it will be admitted that it amounts to a very great defect—in our procedure unavoidable? Is it absolutely necessary? If it can be avoided, surely, in the general interest of Parliament, it ought to be avoided.

I do not myself know what led to this form of legislation. I apprehend that, at all events, the Government draftsman himself must understand his own Bills, and I presume, also, that he draws up some memorandum explaining the details of the Bill for the use of the Minister representing the Department. If that be so, would there be any difficulty in these memoranda being printed for the information of the House? This has already been done in one or two cases. There was one case last year in connection with a Scottish Land Bill, when the Department published an explanatory memorandum. On the one side they printed the Crofters Acts and the other Acts referred to and on the opposite side they set out the portions of the Bill as they related to the different clauses, thereby making quite plain the alterations which the Bill sought to effect. Why cannot something of that sort be done with regard to all Government Bills? It is very possible that there may be objections to taking the course I have suggested, but there are surely other means of meeting the difficulty.

I ask your Lordships to-day to grant me a Committee to inquire into the matter to see whether there are not some means by which these Bills can be rendered intelligible when they are first brought up, and thereby save us an inordinate amount of time and labour. This is especially necessary in regard to this House. It is probable that we shall be again bombarded with a series of important Bills in the concluding weeks of the session, and if, in addition to this fact, the Bills are presented to us in a form which renders it difficult to understand their exact effect, the misfortunes under which we shall labour will be greatly increased. For these reasons I venture to hope the Government will grant me the Committee for which I ask.

Moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire whether means cannot be devised, either in the way of a detailed memorandum or otherwise, for conveying to the House in plain language the effect of proposed legislation when reference is made in Government Bills to Acts and sections of Acts of Parliament without explanation."—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, I am sure every Member of the House will sympathise with the noble Earl in the difficulty he has encountered in interpreting Bills laid before Parliament; but I am not at all sure that it is necessary to invoke a Committee to devise a remedy for the state of things complained of. I think the reasons which induce Government draftsmen to cast Bills in this form is pretty obvious—namely, to shorten debates in the Committee stage and to give as little cause as possible for putting down Amendments. It has always seemed to me that there was a not very difficult way of dealing with this matter. It would be of no use, of course, for this House to take any steps which were not also taken by the other House, but it seems to me that it would be perfectly easy for your Lordships to pass a Standing Order under which it should be agreed that no part of any Bill which was certified by a competent authority to be merely a re-enactment of the existing law of the land should be capable of Amendment or of discussion. Then you might set out the law as it would be when the Bill was passed. I think if something of that kind were done the object of the noble Earl would be attained and Bills coming before Parliament would be easily understood.

But what I venture to think is even more important is that an Act, when it appears on the Statute-book, should be perfectly plain and readily understood by those unfortunate persons, Judges and magistrates, who are called upon to interpret and administer it. I would like, in this connection, to call your Lordships' attention to a clause in a Bill which is not yet before this House but which probably will come before it—the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill. Clause 2, subsection (1) reads—

> "A local authority may be authorised to purchase land compulsorily for the purposes of Part III of the principal Act, by means of an order submitted to the Local Government Board and confirmed by the Board, and subsections (1), (3), and (5) of Section 26, subsection (3) of Section 43, and Part I of the First Schedule of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907, shall apply for the purpose, with the substitution of the local authority under the Act for the council, and of the Local Government Board for the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries."

Does anybody in the least understand what that means? Yet that is a proposal which is placed before Parliament, and which we are expected to be able to run and read. I hope that, whether a Committee is appointed to consider this matter or not, something will be done to make it more easy to understand measures brought before your Lordships. At the request of a private Member, an explanatory Memorandum upon the Telegraph Construction Bill has been prepared by the Department, but it has been found necessary to cover three pages of print, foolscap size, in order to make the Bill intelligible. I venture to think it really is a scandal that we should be expected to consider and understand Bills put before us in this shape, and I trust your Lordships will enter an emphatic protest against this very undesirable, but growing, practice.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, I find myself in complete sympathy with the noble Earl who moved the Motion now before your Lordships. Indeed, I have lost no convenient opportunity during the last twenty years of protesting against this system of legislation by reference which has crept into our legislative methods. But I am sure your Lordships will admit that the draftsmen are not to blame at all in the matter. The draftsmen are men of great learning, research, and experience, and they carry out the wishes of the persons who introduce the Bills. I think we must saddle the blame upon ourselves, and those who are the promoters of Bills.

I will not indiscriminately condemn all legislation by reference, because I do not think it is quite apprehended how wide the term is. Legislation by reference, I think we may say, commenced, at all events any considerable development of it commenced, with the practice of incorporating certain statutes like the Railway Clauses Act, which statutes themselves are really an epitome of various sections in use in each local Act. It was found convenient to epitomise them, so to speak, in one general Act, and to introduce that Act by way of consolidation. That was the commencement of the practice. Then it was extended to introducing other clauses of Acts which were not familiar nor compendious Acts. There have been various developments of that practice, and it has now come to this—that one frequently finds a provision that section so-and-so of an Act shall be deemed to include something which it does not include, or to mean something which it does not mean; or it is provided that references to Sections (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), (*d*), (*e*), and (*f*) shall be construed as though they were references to some other sections of some other Acts.

I do not grudge Members of both Houses the sympathy which has been extended to them in their laborious efforts to understand Bills in this form; but their labour is light and their trouble insignificant in comparison with that of those who, like myself, are called upon from time to time to say what this conglomeration of Acts means. My noble and learned colleagues in this House know the excruciating difficulty experienced in piecing out the meaning of various sections of Acts which have been flung together and made whole without adequate consideration of the bearing of one clause upon another. I am very glad the noble Earl has called attention to this question. It is a very important one, because if the practice is continued you may, in the end, get your Statute-book in such a mess that it will be almost impossible for anyone except an expert to make out what a statute means. I suppose human nature is instinctively in favour of brevity of expression, and this has had something to do with it. Brevity has brought obscurity, and I am not sure that the obscurity which the practice involves has been altogether unwelcome to Governments.

Then as regards the remedy. A simple statement, as suggested by the noble Earl, setting out the effect of the proposed legislation, such as was circulated in the case of the Scottish Bill last year, would be very useful so far as it went, but, of course, that is no use at all to those who have to interpret the Bill after it is passed. Therefore I should look for some further alleviation. The noble Earl who spoke second suggested that there should be some method of agreeing upon clauses if we were assured that they did not alter the law as it is, but were merely, for the purpose of convenience and clearness, a re-enactment of the existing law. That, to a very large extent, is so now. I think a great deal may be looked for from the consolidation of statutes which do not alter the law but merely put it in a shape in which it is more easily understood; but, although that might relieve us from some of the mischief that has taken place in the past, I am not sure that it would be wholly effective. I think it very desirable that some Committee should be appointed to consider the whole question. I suggest, however, that it might be desirable to communicate with the other House with a view to the appointment of a Joint Committee of both Houses. If the noble Earl will communicate with us we will certainly help him in securing a perfectly satisfactory Committee. Perhaps the noble Earl will leave the matter open for a couple of days to consider whether the Committee should be a Committee of this House or a Joint Committee of both Houses, or in what other way the object desired can be best achieved.

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: My Lords, this is no new discussion. I think your Lordships will bear me witness that I have on many occasions protested against the mode in which Bills have been drafted, on the ground that they had within them those sources of mischief which the noble and learned Lord has described. I am bound to say that I have been startled to find that it has become a common practice to negative the Standing Committee stage. The appointment of the Standing Committee was in great measure an effort to prevent the confusion which the Lord Chancellor has described, and when I sat upon the Woolsack I repeatedly prevented from passing the Motion to negative the Standing Committee. I do not, however, believe that my noble and learned friend has ever exercised that power. The sole object of the Standing Committee was to secure that what was intended to be enacted was properly conveyed in the language of the Bill; and I very well remember that my noble and learned friend the late Lord Herschell, who had a great belief in the Standing Committee, continually pointed out that one of the most important functions which this House performed was that of seeing that the draftsmanship of Bills was such as would commend them to the Judges afterwards and not lead to that state of confusion which has been so graphically described to your Lordships this afternoon. I must say I entirely agree with the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack as to the effect very often upon the Judges who have to interpret these Acts, and I should be very glad to see any alteration that could be made. In the meantime I think that what Parliament in its wisdom has determined should be one of the stages of a Bill should not be negatived, as it now habitually is, and that the Standing Committee should occasionally be allowed to meet.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, when I moved for a Committee I meant a Committee of this House, as your Lordships will see from the terms of the Motion. I suggested a Committee of this House because I gathered, from communications with Members of the other House, that owing to the rather confused condition in which they are at the present time there was no chance of their doing anything at the moment in this direction. I gladly, of course, accept the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack to defer the matter for a few days. Perhaps the better course would be to adjourn the Motion, and in the meantime I will consult the noble and learned Lord as to the form which it should take. It is no use merely uttering a protest. We have been protesting against this practice almost ever since I have been in the House. The noble Earl the Chairman of Committees suggested the passing of a Standing Order to deal with this matter. Well, the advisability of that course is precisely a matter which might be considered by this Committee. I should like to say that I had no special intention of finding fault with those eminent public servants, the draftsmen. I quite admit they are men of great learning and great research. I cannot pretend to possess great learning myself, and I have no wish to be a man of great research; and it is because I find difficulty in arriving at any satisfactory conclusion after an examination of Bills that I hope some means will be devised, either in the way of a detailed memorandum or otherwise, for conveying to the House in plain language the effect of proposed legislation, thus rendering it unnecessary for the private member to search these matters out for himself. I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Moved, That the debate be adjourned.—(*The Earl of Camperdown.*)

On Question, debate adjourned *sine die.*

DELAY IN RETRIAL.

LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH, who had the following Question on the Paper—

To ask His Majesty's Government whether their attention has been called to the case of a prisoner charged with a serious crime in regard to which the jury were unable to agree on a verdict; and whether it is the case that a period of five months must elapse before any further trial can take place,

said: My Lords, since I came to the House I have received, through a Member of the Government, a request from the Department concerned asking that my Question should be postponed, as they required more time for consideration. As a matter of course I at once consented to postpone it, and I suggest putting it down for Wednesday of next week. But I wished to explain that the adjournment was not capriciously made on my own Motion, but was the result of a most courteous request from the Department.

House adjourned at Five o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 18th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

COMMISSION.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners.

The House went; and, having returned, Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to a number of Acts. (See page 993.)

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.,:—Barry Railway Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time.

LIVERPOOL CORPORATION (GENERAL POWERS) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section B.); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill, without Amendment; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill; Lincoln Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

That they have appointed a Committee consisting of five Lords, to join with a Committee of this House to consider the following Bills, viz., :—Companies (Consolidation) Bill; Post Office Consolidation Bill; Statute Law Revision Bill; and they request this House to appoint an equal number of its Members to be joined with the said Lords.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Norwich (two); and Oxford; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Merthyr Vale, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (PROVISION OF MEALS) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Kirriemuir, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Norwich (two); and Oxford; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Egremont; Enderby; Erwood and Gwendur; Fleetwood; Fergus; Ilford; Leicester (two); Romford; Stirling; and Tewkesbury; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHTS ON VEHICLES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, against; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Kirriemuir, against; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Stoke Newington, against; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition of the Scottish National Sabbath School Union, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RIGHTS OF WAY (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forfar, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

ALKALI, ETC., WORKS REGULATION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Forty-fourth Annual Report on Alkali, etc., Works by the Chief Inspector, being for 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 182.]

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4012 4014, and 4019 [by Command] to lie upon the Table.

PENSIONS (CIVIL LIST).

Return ordered "of all persons now in receipt of Pensions charged upon the Civil List (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 300, of Session 1889)."—(*Mr. Lamont.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Lisburn Letter Deliveries.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that delay exists in the delivery of letters to certain houses on the outskirts of Lisburn, County Antrim; and whether, in view of the increase in the number of houses recently built in the immediate vicinity of the town, he will increase the staff of letter-carriers at the disposal of the local postmaster.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am having inquiry made in the matter, and will acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Assault on Long Eaton Postman.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the case of a postman named Cole, of Long Eaton, who was assaulted while in the execution of his duty; and whether the Post Office will allow him the costs he was put to in summoning his assailant, who was convicted, and in meeting a cross summons issued against him.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton*). Cole seems to have taken out a summons on his own responsibility, and I understand that the bench ordered his assailant to pay a fine of 20s. and costs. I have received no application from Cole in regard to the matter. If he desires to make a claim, I will of course consider it.

United States and Patents Act.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether His Majesty's Government has received any representations as to the effect of The Patents Act, 1907, upon United States manufactures; and can he inform the House what is the general purport of these representations and of the reply made to them.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Representations have been received with reference to certain provisions of the Act which affect patents worked exclusively or mainly abroad. The United States Government appear to be under some misapprehension in the matter, and correspondence between the Governments of the two countries is still proceeding.

Elementary School Age.

MR. MASSIE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): To ask the President of the Board of Education how many applications the Board has received for permission to extend the limit of age in an elementary school under the proviso to subsection 2, of Section 22, of The Education Act, 1902; and how many of such applications have been granted.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman*). No list of applications for the Board's consent under Section 22 (2) of The Education Act, 1902, has been kept. A general consent was given, as a temporary measure, up to 31st July, 1907, in the case of London, Wimbledon, and Worthing, and sanction has also been given in the case of 103 schools elsewhere.

Case of Mrs. Johanna O'Callaghan.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have considered the case of Mrs. Johanna O'Callaghan of the Downes, Ballingarry, in the County of Limerick, whose husband, since deceased, surrendered his holdings on the property of Mr. T. D. Atkinson, because they were rackrented; and can he say what decision they have come to in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell*). The Estates Commissioners have decided to take no action in this case. The applicant surrendered the holding for money consideration.

Ichang Gaol.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what was the total cost of the gaol at Ichang, and how many persons, European or Asiatic, it will accommodate; and how many Europeans and how many Asiatics have been sentenced to imprisonment in the gaol at Ichang.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The lock-up at Ichang is contained in the building which includes the consular offices; the cost was included in the total cost of the building, and may be stated approximately at £70. It is intended to accommodate not more than three persons. I have no information how many Europeans or Asiatics have been imprisoned there.

Cost of Chinese Gaols.

Mr. HOLT: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will state at which places in China gaols have been erected by the British Government; and whether the cost of building and maintenance is charged to the local community or the British taxpayer.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) The following consular buildings in China are provided with a gaol or a lock-up out of moneys voted by Parliament, the maintenance is charged to the vote:—

Newchang	A lock-up.
Tientsin	3 cells.
Chefoo	10 cells.
Shanghai	82 cells. Part of this building is let to the municipality as a gaol.
Ichang	Lock-up.
Chingkiang	Lock-up and 1 cell.
Wuhu	Lock-up and 1 cell.
Kiukiang	2 cells.
Hankow	4 cells.
Chingking	Lock-up and 1 cell.
Ningpo	2 cells.
Wenchow	Lock-up.
Pagoda Anchorage	Lock-up.
Foochow	Lock-up.
Amoy	4 cells.
Swatow	6 cells.
Canton	Lock-up.
Winchow	Lock-up.
Hoi-How	2 cells.
Pakhoi	Lock-up and 1 cell.

Ichang Gaol—Poisoning of Clerks of Works.

Mr. HOLT: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the statement contained in the Report of the Committee of Public Accounts, that the Chinese persist in poisoning European clerks of the works employed on the construction of the gaol at Ichang, is correct, and, if so, how many were poisoned, and with how many fatal results; and has a similar trouble been experienced at any other place in China.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) Two clerks of works have been poisoned; one native, one European. The native died, the European survived. The reply to the last paragraph is in the negative.

Phibbs Estate, near Tubbercurry.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Phibbs Estate, situate in the congested district of Moylough, near Tubbercurry, County Sligo, was purchased by the Congested Districts Board over two years ago; whether this estate contains two grazing farms; and whether, if so, seeing that the estate is a congested one, steps will now be taken to have these grass lands purchased for the enlargement of uneconomic holdings in the district.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This estate has not yet been vested in the Congested Districts Board, but it is understood that the question of the vendor's title will shortly be decided by the Land Commission. There are no grazing holding on the estate; the two largest farms, each rented at less than £50, are held on judicial tenancies.

Cooper Estate, Tubbercurry.

Mr. O'DOWD: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have refused to take action in the case of Jane Cunlun, who was evicted from her farm on the Cooper Estate, situate in the townland of Durrus, near Cloonacool, Tubbercurry, County Sligo, although the man in occupation has of his own free will signed a document agreeing to give up this land and his own small farm besides, provided he gets a farm elsewhere; and, if so, will he state the reasons which influenced the Commissioners to arrive at this decison, seeing that the inspector who visited the locality last year seemed satisfied with the justice of the case of Jane Cunlun.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have fully inquired into this case, and, upon consideration of all the circumstances, have decided to take no action in it.

Carnalick Evicted Tenant.

MR. O'DOWD: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Pat M'Canick, of Carnalick, Cloonacool, Tubbercurry, County Sligo, was evicted from his farm on the Gray Estate, Carnalick, in 1884, without compensation, and after he had erected a substantial dwelling-house and out-offices, although he had previously paid a fine of £10 to the landlord for two acres of this land; whether his case has been investigated by the Estates Commissioners; and, if so, what has been their decision regarding it.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have investigated this case, and have decided to take no action upon the application.

County Cavan Evicted Tenants.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say how many evicted tenants it is intended to reinstate in County Cavan; in how many cases are the evicted farms in the landlords' hands; and will he say whether any steps have been taken to deal with the Cavan evicted tenants under the Evicted Tenants Act of 1907, giving the present position of the various cases in course of being dealt with.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the names of fifty-eight applicants in County Cavan are on their list of persons suitable to receive holdings in the event of such becoming available. In seven of these cases the evicted holdings are stated to be in the landlords' possession, and these are being dealt with in the following manner; in three cases on one estate the Commissioners have directed steps to be taken under the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907; in one case the Commissioners are negotiating for the purchase of the entire estate under Section 6; in one case they have made an offer to the landlord for the former holding; in one case in which the landlord is himself working the holding, the Commissioners propose to endeavour to acquire a holding elsewhere for the evicted tenant; and in the remaining case the Commissioners have decided to wait until they are dealing with the entire estate before dealing with the particular case. The Commissioners have taken steps under the Evicted Tenants Act for the acquisition of untenanted land on four estates, and are making inquiries as to further untenanted land in the county with a view to the restoration of the evicted tenants whose former holdings are occupied.

Langley Estate, Longford, Evicted Tenants.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what steps, if any, have been taken to reinstate the evicted tenants on the Langley estate, Longford Pass, County Tipperary.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had an inspection made of the untenanted land on this estate with a view to the restoration of the evicted tenants, and the owner has expressed his willingness to accept the Commissioners' estimated price. Formal proceedings for the sale have been instituted accordingly.

Grange Castle Labourer's Cottage Application.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether an application for a site of a labourer's cottage on the farm occupied by Mr. Thomas Ponsonby, at Grange Castle, which was made at the inquiry held at Urlingford, County Kilkenny, some months ago, was recommended or otherwise by the Local Government inspector, Mr. Hannigan; and, if not recommended, will he state the reasons for the rejection of the application.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This application was disallowed by the inspector on the ground that the site formed part of Kilcooly Abbey demesne. The reason for its rejection has already been communicated to the rural district council.

Robert Heard's Kilcommon Estate.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any inspector from the Estates Commissioners has yet visited the estate of the late Robert H. W. Heard, Kilcommon, County Tipperary, in respect of which agreements were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in May, 1905; and, seeing that in answer to a Question put on 4th March, 1907, it was then stated that an inspector would shortly visit the estate, will steps now be taken to have the purchase completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The papers relative to this estate are in the hands of one of the Estates Commissioners' inspectors, but the Commissioners understand that he has not yet been able to visit the estate.

Coleraine Rural District Council Solicitors' Costs.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board, Ireland, have recently sanctioned the payment of a bill of costs furnished by Messrs. Carlisle and Duncan, solicitors, Dublin, to the Coleraine Rural District Council, although the said payment was considerably without the statutory period; whether the Local Government Board had some time previously declined to permit the payments of accounts due to Sir William Baxter, chemist, Coleraine, for medical requisites, and to Mr. H. W. Leach, solicitor, Coleraine, for professional duties rendered, on the ground that the statutory period for payment had been exceeded; and whether, in these circumstances, he will now permit the Coleraine Rural District Council to make payment to Sir William Baxter and to Mr. H. W. Leach.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The facts are not quite as suggested in the Question. The time was extended in the case of Messrs. Carlisle and Duncan, and Mr. H. W. Leach, solicitors, and the extension was refused in the case of Sir William Baxter. In the case of the solicitors' charges, it was contended that as proceedings were still pending when the first bills of costs were prepared, they should be regarded as one transaction with the final bills of costs. In the case of Sir William Baxter, no sufficient reason was shown why the account for the goods supplied had not been furnished within the statutory period. Moreover the account extended back for over four years, and the Local Government Board had no power to authorise payments to be made in regard to claims not made within two years. It is not now possible to grant permission for payment to Sir William Baxter.

Lisburn Insanitary Dairies.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the report of the Local Government Board inspector with regard to the insanitary condition of the dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops in the Lisburn urban district, the objectionable position and unsatisfactory condition of the slaughter yards, the want of a public abattoir, and the lack of any provision for the inspection of the meat and milk supply of the district; and whether the Local Government Board proposes to take any steps to urge or to compel the local authority to take action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Report of the Local Government Board's inspector contains references to the matters mentioned in the Question. The Board have urged the council to appoint an expert inspector, such as a veterinary surgeon, to supervise the meat and milk supplies of the urban district.

Rights of British Princes.

Mr. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether His Majesty's Government is still bound by the guarantees given to native princes of India by Colonel Walker in 1807–8, undertaking on behalf of the Government that their rights, usages, and customs should be respected and safeguarded from violence, and confirmed in 1858 by the Royal Proclamation announcing that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company were accepted by this country and would be scrupulously maintained.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) I have been unable, in the short time since notice was given of the hon. Member's Question, to trace any document connected with Colonel Walker's settlement of 1807–8, containing guarantees such as those referred to in the first part of the Question. The pledge to the native princes, in the Proclamation of 1858, as to the maintenance of all treaties and engagements made with them, holds good.

Indian Vice-Regal and Privy Councils.

MR. MACCAW (Down, W.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he will state when the proposals of the Government of India with regard to the enlargement of the Vice-regal and Provincial Councils in India will be published.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) It is, I fear, impossible at the present time to give an Answer to the hon. Member's Question.

Navy Clothing Contracts.

MR. WATT: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what was the value of the contracts placed in the last year in connection with the clothing of the Navy, and how much of that was placed with firms whose principal office is in Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The approximate value of contracts for clothing materials, making up, etc., in 1907–8, was £210,000; contracts to the value of about £22,000 were placed with Scottish firms.

Delay of Commercial Telegrams at Cork.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork): To ask the Postmaster-General is he aware that commercial telegrams have suffered serious delay at the hands of the Department within the last few weeks in Cork, and that Press messages for Cork handed in at this House have, on more than one occasion, taken three hours to reach their destination; and whether he will be good enough to inquire whether these delays have arisen from under-staffing, and will take steps to remedy the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I shall be glad if the hon. Member will furnish me with the dates and exact nature of the complaints to which he alludes, and I will have inquiry made.

Non-Crofting Parishes in the Highlands.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the name of each parish in the Highland crofting counties which is not a crofting parish, and the population of each such non-crofting parish.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The information desired by my hon. friend is as follows—

County of Argyll—	
Campbeltown	10,236
Dunoon and Kilmun	10,468
Gigha and Cara	374
Inverchaolain	334
Killean and Kilchenzie	1,078
Kilmartin	663
Kilmodan	387
Southend	732
County of Inverness—	
Cawdor	925
Croy	579*
County of Ross and Cromarty—	
Cromartie	1,848
Rosemarkie	1,465

Medical Officers of Health in the Highlands.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state how many medical officers of health have been appointed in the Highland crofting counties during the last five years; and how many of them possess a diploma in sanitary science, public health, or State medicine, as required under Section 54 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) In the Highland crofting counties there have been appointed during the last five years medical officers of health for three counties, six districts of counties, and four parishes or portions of districts. All possess the statutory diploma except four, and two of these have been appointed on condition that they obtain it.

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* Part of—rest is in Nairn; population, 570—total, 1,149.

Scottish Higher Grades.

MR. MASSIE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the number of higher grade schools in Scotland; the number of scholars on the registers of such schools; what percentage these are of the total number of scholars in public elementary schools; up to what age scholars in Scotland are allowed to remain in higher grade schools; and what grants are offered to such schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) At the end of the last school year there were 147 higher grade schools in Scotland. The total number of scholars on the registers of these schools was 18,323, representing 2·26 per cent. of the total number of scholars in public elementary schools (811,000). There is no limit to the age at which scholars may attend a higher grade school, but grants are not paid in respect of scholars over eighteen years of age (Article 25 of the Code). The conditions and rates of grant in respect of higher grade schools are set forth in Chapter IX. of the Code of Regulations for Day Schools.

Westminster Board of Guardians—Dismissal of Assistant Relieving Officer.

MR. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that, the sanction of the Board having been refused to the appointment of the chairman of the Westminister Board of Guardians to the position of relieving officer, the majority of that body have now determined the appointment, on a month's notice, of the assistant relieving officer who has rendered efficient service for several years; and whether, before sanctioning the dismissal of this official and the appointment of an outsider to the vacant position, he will cause an inquiry to be made into what is alleged by the minority of the guardians to be tantamount to the victimising of a meritorious officer because he had the support of the section of the guardians who successfully moved the Local Government Board in the matter of the selection of the chairman as relieving officer.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am not aware that the guardians have at present determined the appointment of the assistant relieving officer. No sanction on the part of the Local Government Board is necessary for that purpose, and I could not undertake to direct a local inquiry in the matter. I ought perhaps to add that in January last I informed the guardians that, having regard to the circumstances of the union, it should not be necessary to employ a relieving officer and an assistant relieving officer, and that the continued employment of both officers would not be sanctioned.

Stow Union Surcharge.

MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the auditor reported to the Local Government Board, in the Stow Union surcharge case, what were the average earnings of the three elder sons per week, or what proportion of their full wages of 41s. a week was lost on account of wet and short days and other contingencies; whether the Local Government Board confirmed the surcharge without any evidence as to this; whether the Local Government Board considered that the elder sons were under any legal liability to maintain their younger brothers; whether the Local Government Board considered that the three elder brothers had a living wage after assisting to keep the younger brothers as well as the mother; what sum did the Local Government Board reckon as sufficient for the elder sons after providing for the rent, and what as sufficient for food and clothing of each child; how was the sum £2 10s. a week earned, since the three elder sons only earned 41s. when in full employ, and it is stated that the work was not constant; and whether either the auditor or the Local Government Board gave any opportunity to the elder sons to state their case.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The auditor reported that the three elder sons earned 14s., 12s., and 15s. per week respectively, but did not state what proportion of their full wages was lost on account of wet and short days and other contingencies. The Local Government Board were not informed on this point. As I stated on the 4th May, in replying to a Question respecting this case, the sons are not liable to maintain their brothers. The Board were only concerned with the case in so far as there was an appeal to them against the auditor's decision in disallowing the relief given to the mother, and it was not necessary for them to consider such points as those referred to in the Question relative to the sufficiency of the means of the three elder brothers after they had rendered the assistance they were giving. The sum of £2 10s. mentioned was made up of the 41s. earned by the three elder sons and of 6s. and 3s. a week earned by the two younger ones. The persons interested, so far as the auditor and the Board were concerned, were the relieving officer and the guardians. The facts were stated by the relieving officer in his appeal, and the Board invited the observations of the guardians. It was open both to them and to the relieving officer to communicate with the sons, if they thought it desirable to do so.

Solihull Union—Relief Regulations.

Mr. BENNETT: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the auditor recently cited some of the guardians of Solihull Union for having given a widow and three small children relief; what was the income of the widow and the ages of the three children and the amount of relief given; whether the auditor proposed to surcharge the guardians because there were three elder children in the house who were earning wages; what were the wages of the elder children allowing for time they were not in work; what did the auditor reckon as sufficient for each of the elder, and what for each of the younger, children to live upon; whether he is aware that the auditor told the guardians that they gave too many medical orders, and that many of them ought to be given on loan; that one of the guardians then told the auditor that in the first case some of the poor would be starved or commit suicide, and in the latter case would not have any doctor, and might some of them die in consequence; that the guardian asked the auditor whether he would take the responsibility in such cases, and the auditor replied in the negative; and will he state what were the duties of an auditor, and whether he had authorised the auditors to discourage medical relief or to advise guardians to place more of it on loan.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I understand that the auditor had reason to doubt whether the case referred to was one of destitution. Hence he gave notice that he was disposed to think the payment of relief in the case illegal, but that cause might be shown against the surcharge which he proposed to make. After hearing the guardians concerned, he came to the conclusion that there was no sufficient ground for making a surcharge, and he accordingly passed the payments. In these circumstances it does not seem necessary to go into the details of the circumstances of the family. As regards the medical orders, the auditor states that he did not express any opinion as to whether there were too many, but he pointed out that there were a large number, and that apparently very few were given on loan. He adds that he has no recollection of either the question or answer mentioned by my hon. friend as to taking responsibility. The duties of the auditors are contained in the statutes and orders relating to their office, and cannot conveniently be summarised in answer to a Question. I have given them no instructions as to discouraging medical relief or as to advising guardians to place more of it on loan.

Hertfordshire Medical Officer of Health.

Mr. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the County Council of Hertfordshire, in reappointing its medical officer of health, added to his duties the appointment of inspecting the children in the elementary schools in the county; whether he can state the number of children to be inspected;

whether the medical officer is required to reside in the county and devote the whole of his time to the duties of his office; whether this medical officer's office has been fixed at Guy's Hospital, London; whether any grants and travelling expenses have been made to maintain this office; whether this position is convenient to the parents of the children and people of Hertfordshire; whether any sanction of his Department has had to be obtained; and, if so, will he state the reasons why he has sanctioned the selection of an office a considerable distance from the county.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I understand that the county council have appointed their county medical officer to act as chief school medical officer under the Education Acts, and that he is required to devote the whole of his time to the duties of these two offices. A sum of £200 per annum appears to be allowed for the provision of a clerk and suitable furnished offices. He is also allowed the necessary travelling expenses and disbursements for stationery, and £20 for the provision of a typewriter. Hitherto the office of the medical officer seems to have been at Guy's Hospital; but I do not know whether the arrangement has been continued. No sanction on my part is required to the appointment which has been made or to the selection of an office, and I have no information on the points mentioned in the Question other than those with which I have dealt above. I may say, however, that when appointing a chief school medical officer the county council also appointed a number of district medical officers of health and other medical practitioners to act as school medical officers for the sanitary districts in their area.

Small Holdings.

Mr. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can state in which, if any, counties the Small Holdings Commissioners have ascertained or taken steps to ascertain, the extent of the demand for small holdings as directed by Section 2, subsection (1) of The Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907; whether they have made any reports to the Board under Section 2 of the same Act; and whether these reports are accessible to Members of this House or to the Press.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Commissioners have been and are in continuous communication with the various local authorities concerned with a view to obtain information as to the extent of the demand for small holdings, and to see that the necessary steps are taken to satisfy that demand. The Commissioners make reports as to their proceedings for the information of the Board, but they are not in such a form as would render it practicable for publicity to be given to them. The Act requires the Board to make an annual report to Parliament as to their proceedings and the proceedings of the Commissioners, but in view of the special interest in the subject at the present moment, and of the considerable amount of work which has been done by local authorities since the Act came into operation, we propose to issue as speedily as possible after the end of the present month an interim statement showing the position in each of the counties at that date, when the Act will have been in operation for six months.

Mr. BRODIE: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, in which, if any, counties have the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries issued directions to the county councils to prepare schemes under Section 3, Sub-section 1, of The Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907; whether any such schemes have been prepared and submitted to the Board; whether any such schemes have been published and advertised under Section 4, subsection 1, of the above Act, whether any local inquiries have been held and any scheme settled and confirmed under this section; in how many cases have the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries used their powers under Clause 39, Sub-section 4, of The Small Holdings and Allotments Act to aid societies having as their object or one of their objects the promotion of co-operation in connection with the cultivation of small holdings or allotments; has the Surrey County Council received instructions to prepare a scheme; and, if so, has the council taken any steps to carry such scheme into effect.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Draft schemes for the provision of small holdings have been prepared and submitted to the Board by the County Councils of Radnor, Somerset, Gloucester, Southampton, the Isle of Wight, and Cambridge. The Radnor scheme has been settled and confirmed, and schemes for Somerset, Gloucester (2), and Southampton have been provisionally approved and have been or are about to be advertised. No necessity for holding a public local inquiry as to any of these schemes has as yet arisen, nor has it as yet been necessary for the Board to exercise the powers conferred upon them by Section 3 (1) of the Act, either in the case of Surrey or elsewhere. The Small Holdings Commissioners are, however, in continuous communication with the various county councils as to the administration of the Act, and action will at once be taken under that section if the circumstances require. No grant has as yet been made under Section 39 (4) of the Act.

Coastguard Service.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any steps have yet been taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the coastguard service; and whether he has any statement to make on the subject.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) This matter is still under consideration.

Pensioner Messengers in Public Departments.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury what are the relative numbers of pensioner messengers and civilian messengers respectively, and how distributed in the Departments of public service; whether the former class receive any, and, if so, what pension in respect of their civil employment; and how the two classes of messengers compare their rates of pay and pension respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The particulars asked for can be ascertained by reference to the Votes for the several Departments in the Civil Service and Revenue Departments Estimates, and in the case of the War Office and Admiralty to the Army and Navy Estimates. Pensioner messengers have no right to pension in respect of their civil employment, but, like other unestablished employees, they receive gratuities on retirement under the Superannuation Act, 1887.

MR. NIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether pensioner messengers are employed in the Government offices as temporary servants at a weekly salary of 21s. with no pensions except such as have already been awarded to them for naval or military service; and, if so, whether these men do precisely the same work as civilian messengers who receive £120 to £150 per annum, and in addition have a pension based upon such civilian service.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Answer to the first Question is in the affirmative, but the pay of one-fourth of the number may rise by annual increments of 1s. a week to 24s. a week, and, like other unestablished employees, they receive gratuities on retirement under the Superannuation Act, 1887. Messengers in receipt of salaries of £120 to £150 are engaged on specially responsible duties. The ordinary messengers receive salaries considerably less than the above.

Elementary School Statistics.

MR. MASSIE: To ask the President of the Board of Education if he will state the number of higher elementary schools in England and Wales, the number of scholars on the registers of such schools, what percentage these are of the total number of scholars in public elementary schools, up to what age scholars in England and Wales are allowed to remain in higher elementary schools, and what grants are offered to such schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) There were sixty-one higher elementary schools recognised by the Board on 1st August, 1907, with 13,682 scholars on the registers, being 0·23 per cent. of the total number of scholars in the public elementary schools. The power to provide instruction in a higher elementary school is limited by Section 22 (2) of the Education Act, 1902, to scholars who, at the close of the school year, will not be more than sixteen years of age, unless the consent of the Board has been given under that section of their retention beyond that limit. The grants payable in respect of scholars in higher elementary schools are in addition to the fee grant and the aid grant payable under Section 10 of The Education Act, 1902—For each unit of average attendance of scholars in the—

	Amount.
First year course - -	30s.
Second year course - -	45s.
Third year course - -	60s.
Fourth year course (when sanctioned) - -	60s.

Certain schools recognised as higher elementary schools on or before 1st August, 1905, receive for the present the higher grants set out in Schedule II. of the Code.

Customs Revenue.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated revenue during the present financial year from the Customs duties on tea, sugar, cocoa, coffee, chicory, currants, figs and figcake, plums (of the various dutiable kinds), prunes, and raisins, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is not usual to make public any details of the estimated revenue of the current financial year beyond those furnished in the Budget Speech.

Education of Soldiers' Children.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended to make any provision for the education of the children of soldiers in places where there are no Army schools provided; is he aware that such provision was made under Paragraph 1183 of Royal Warrant for pay now cancelled; is it intended that soldiers' children in places where no Army schools are provided are not to be under Army school regulations; and will he consider the effect of throwing the cost of schooling on the parents where they happen to be sent in course of duty to places where there are no Army schools available for their children.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Army schools are provided for the education of soldiers' children at all military stations where there are no free civil elementary schools within a mile of their residence which these children can attend. The cancellation of Article 1183 of the Pay Warrant has not removed the provision for the education of soldiers' children, as Paragraphs 60 and 61 of the Army school regulations provide for their attendance either at an Army school or at a civil school. Cases where fees are considered necessary are specially referred to the War Office. The cost of paying for the schooling of soldiers' children has not been forced upon the parents, and if the latter have in any cases paid such fees they must have done so voluntarily.

Enniskillen Military Stores Escort.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Secretary of State for War is he aware that Army Ordnance Depot labourers were employed on 4th June, 1908, as an escort for military stores at Enniskillen; are these men classed and paid as unskilled labourers only; if so, by what authority are they used for military purposes, and is this in accordance with Paragraph 574, Regulations for Army Ordnance Services, Part I., 1907; and will he consider the advisability of paying these men at a better rate than mere unskilled labourers, or at any rate have their pay assimilated to that paid to the same class in Dublin and other Irish towns.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is the usual practice in the Department to send employees with consignments of ammunition being conveyed by rail to ensure that they are correctly delivered and loaded into the trucks. These men are not employed as an escort to the ammunition. These men are classed as unskilled labourers and there is accordingly no intention of paying them at a better rate than unskilled labourers.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Dockyard Pensioners.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can state the average age at death of the pensioners, formerly on the establishment of His Majesty's dockyards, who died during 1907.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): Two hundred and forty-nine pensioners who were previously borne on the establishment of His Majesty's dockyards, died during the year 1907—the average age at death being seventy-two and a quarter years.

Government Losses by Fire.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he will grant a Return showing the amount lost by fire in Government premises during the last two years; whether the losses or a part of them were covered by insurance; and in how many cases were the fires at night.

MR. MCKENNA: As far as is known, five cases of fire at night have occurred during the last two years in Government premises. Admiralty property is not insured against fire, and a precise valuation of the premises is not made; particulars, therefore, are not available which would enable the Return asked for to be given.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman give no indication, even roughly, of the amount involved?

MR. MCKENNA: I inquired this morning and was unable to get any idea.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Does not the Admiralty know whether it loses £1,000 or £100,000?

MR. MCKENNA: It certainly does not lose anything like £100,000. It is quite a small sum involved.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: May I take it the loss is very small?

MR. MCKENNA: It certainly is not large.

New Cavalry Sword.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the new pattern cavalry sword is satisfactory; how many have been manufactured; how many have been issued; and when will the re armament be completed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): The pattern recommended by the Committee is under the consideration of the Army Council, and I hope to announce a decision very shortly.

Volunteer Long Service Medal.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the announcement that Volunteers of sixteen years' service completed before 31st March, 1908, are to receive the long-service medal, Volunteer officers who have completed sixteen years service before 31st March, 1908, are to receive the Volunteer officers' decoration.

MR. HALDANE: Yes, Sir. In this respect, so far as the Volunteer decoration is concerned, the same rule will apply to officers who are unable to join the Territorial Force, as to Volunteers for the medal.

Imprisoned Soldiers.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War the number of soldiers who were in prison on 31st December, 1907, under sentence of courts-martial; and whether any, and, if so, how many, were imprisoned by field courts-martial in the South African War.

MR. HALDANE: One hundred and seventy-seven soldiers were in prison on 31st December last under sentences of courts-martial, of whom only one was imprisoned by order of field court-martial in the South African War.

Courts Martial in 1907.

MR. JOHN WARD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many general and district courts-martial were held during the year 1907; how many soldiers were tried by such courts; what was the number of acquittals and convictions; and what were the terms of imprisonment inflicted.

MR. HALDANE: The figures are as follows:—General courts-martial: Tried, 8; acquitted, 1; convicted, 7. District courts-martial: Tried, 5,385; acquitted, 153; convicted, 5,131. The average term of imprisonment inflicted was as follows: Penal servitude, 4·5 years; imprisonment with hard labour: general courts-martial, 14 months; district courts-martial, 157 days; detention, 51·8 days. The figures do not include India.

His Majesty's Uniform in Police Courts.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that a letter was sent by him to the Willesden magistrate requesting that a soldier who was charged with disorderly conduct in the street should not be placed in the dock, as it would disgrace His Majesty's uniform, he will say if this departure will now become the established rule of his Department.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. Member appears to have been misinformed. The magistrate in question suggested that plain clothes should be supplied to soldiers charged before civil Courts to avoid the appearance of the prisoners in the dock in uniform. It was pointed out in reply that it would be a matter of considerable difficulty to provide the necessary suits of plain clothes. I may observe that it is the fact that such men are soldiers, and not that they are wearing His Majesty's uniform, that brings discredit upon the profession.

Indian Bomb Outrage.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether Khudisam Bhose, who has been convicted of murder for the bomb outrage at Mozufferpore, was arraigned in 1906 on a charge of distributing seditious literature; and whether the Bengal Government in consideration of his age, sixteen years, withdrew from the prosecution.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): Before an answer is given, may I ask whether the hon. Gentleman can say that the same person as is named in the Question was several times under restraint for insanity during the past few years, and whether he will inquire into the present state of his mind before the execution is carried out?

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is in accordance with precedent, and with the right use of the privileges enjoyed by Members of this House in putting Questions to Ministers of the Crown, for an hon. Member to bring up against a prisoner actually under sentence of death charges alleged to have been made against him when a boy, charges admittedly not proceeded with, and charges which he never had an opportunity of answering?

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Mr. Speaker, may I ask you, Sir, whether the suggestion implied in the Question put by the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs is not unworthy of a Member of this House?

*MR. SPEAKER: I am totally unacquainted with the facts of the case, and without knowledge of them, I really cannot say what underlying charge, if any, there is.

MR. MACKARNESS: The point of my Question to you, Sir, was whether, when a prisoner is under sentence of death and presumably about to be executed unless reprieved, it is right that in this House a previous charge against him should be brought up which has never been proceeded with.

*MR. SPEAKER: If this unfortunate man is under sentence of death, I do not think the Question can do him any harm.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): The object of the Question may be to prevent a reprieve.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): I do not think that the fact of this Question having been put can make any difference to the decision of the authorities with regard to the present charge. With regard to the Question on the Paper, the facts are as stated. In respect to the Question put by the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil, I am not aware of the facts he has brought before the House, but, of course, they will be inquired into.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Will action be taken to delay the execution until these facts have been inquired into?

MR. BUCHANAN: Of course, the statement of the hon. Gentleman will be brought immediately before the Secretary of State.

*MR. REES: May I ask whether, since it has unhappily proved that seditious students are the makings of murderers, the policy which led to the abandonment of this prosecution has itself been abandoned?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter for discussion on the Indian Budget.

New Press Law in India.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether under the new Press Law in India the magistrates who are empowered to order the confiscation of newspapers and printing presses are duly qualified barristers, or trained lawyers with judicial experience; and whether the appeal from their decisions to the High Court will be to a Court of one Judge or of how many.

MR. BUCHANAN: As will be seen from Section 2 of the Act, the magistrates empowered under it are a district magistrate and a chief presidency magistrate. The latter is ordinarily a barrister of experience; the former is a member of the Indian Civil Service with long judicial experience, who may or may not be a barrister. As regards the High Courts, the Indian High Courts Act leaves it to the Courts themselves to provide, by their own rules, for the exercise, by one or more Judges, of their appellate jurisdiction. In the Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay High Courts I understand that criminal appeals are always heard by a bench of at least two Judges. The Secretary of State has requested the Government of India to furnish him with reports of all proceedings under this Act, and he proposes to lay these reports before Parliament from time to time.

MR. MACKARNESS: In the event of an appeal to the High Court against an order for confiscation made by a magistrate, will the operation of the order be suspended until the appeal is heard?

MR. BUCHANAN: If my hon. friend will look at the Act, he will see that the printing press and the material belonging to it would not be available for further printing.

Indian Immigrants at Vancouver.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what arrangements have been made for the repatriation of the indigent Indian immigrants at Vancouver.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): I have no information on the matter referred to in my hon. friend's Question, but I will cause inquiry to be made of the Governor-General.

Jamaica and the Panama Canal.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the opportunity afforded by the recent earthquake in Jamaica of bringing the port of Kingston into line with modern requirements; and whether, having regard to Imperial interests, and in order that Jamaica may reap the full advantage likely to accrue from the completion of the Panama Canal, steps will be taken for the construction of a foreshore road at Kingston to carry an extension of the Government railway.

COLONEL SEELY: The matter is under the consideration of the Colonial

Government and the Secretary of State is awaiting their recommendations.

Transvaal Gold Mines.

Mr. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, at the recent opening of the Transvaal Parliament, Lord Selborne made a statement as to the condition of the gold-mining industry and the effect of the policy of repatriating the Chinese labourers; if so, what was the nature of the statement; and whether he can give particulars as to the supply of labour and the output of gold from the Rand mines in May, 1907, and May, 1908, respectively.

Colonel SEELY: A summary of the Governor's speech has appeared in the Press, but I have no official information with regard to it. In May, 1907, 172,797 persons were employed on the Rand Gold Mines, and gold of the value of £2,148,920 was produced. I cannot give the total number of persons employed for May, 1908. The gold output for last month was £2,371,265.

Trade between Germany and Canada.

Mr. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he will lay upon the Table of the House further Papers relating to the commercial arrangements between Canada and Germany (in continuation of White Paper Cd. 1630, of 1903).

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): There are no Papers that could be usefully laid before the House at present.

Forced Labour on Portuguese African Cocoa Plantations.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware of the existence of slave labour upon the cocoa plantations of St. Thomé and Principe, in Portuguese Africa; whether he is aware that a quantity of the cocoa so produced is imported into this Country, and whether he will make representations to the Portuguese Government similar to those recently made to the Belgian Government in regard to the labour conditions ruling in the Congo State.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The system in force upon the cocoa plantations of San Thomé and Principe is contract labour. I am aware that cocoa produced by that system is imported into this country;. His Majesty's Government have been in communication with the Portuguese Government on the labour question in the islands. The Portuguese Government have despatched an officer, in whom they place complete confidence, to West Africa in order to examine the working of the present system, and to report what, if any, new regulations are necessary.

Mr. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) asked whether there was not in existence a report by a gentleman who was sent out by the cocoa manufacturers of this country to inquire into the conditions of labour upon those plantations.

Sir EDWARD GREY: There is such a report. It is not an official report, but it was communicated to the Foreign Office.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: Is there any possibility of our obtaining it?

Sir EDWARD GREY: It was drawn up by others and only communicated to us. We should have to communicate with those responsible for it before we could issue it.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Have we under any treaty or convention any *status* in regard to this matter?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I imagine it arises out of the Brussels Convention.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a large proportion of the Liberal Party funds are derived from cocoa manufacturers in this country who obtain their raw material from those islands?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The Liberal Party funds have nothing to do with this House.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): Have we any convention or agreement with Portugal under which it is our duty to watch the interests of the natives?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I do not know of any special obligation. We have been in communication with the Portuguese Government already.

French Duties on Tinplates.

Mr. W. THORNE: I beg ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the proposed increase of French import duty on tinplates; if he is aware that the imports of tinplates of English manufacture in France were for the year ending 31st December, 1907, 25,801 tons, and for the five months ending 31st May, 1908, 12,357 tons; and if he is in a position to prevent the increased import duty being placed upon English manufactured tinplates with a view of preventing an injury being done to the trade.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The imports for consumption on which duty was levied were much less than the figures quoted, namely, 14,703 metric tons in 1907, and 6,287 metric tons in the first four months of this year. The figures for the five months are not yet available. The figures based on our recorded exports to France, therefore, exaggerate the amount of tinplate on which duty is actually levied. The balance is presumably in transit, re-exported, or worked up under Customs supervision for re-export. With regard to the second part of the hon. Member's Question, I would refer him to the answer returned yesterday to a Question put by my hon. friend the Member for the Carmarthen Boroughs.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what means of suasion are at his command in the event of the French import duties being increased? Has not the right hon. Baronet contemplated the possibility of the Commission reporting in favour of an increase of the duties?

Sir EDWARD GREY: That is a question which would be more relative when the Commission which is now studying the matter in France has reported, and we know the actual proposals with which we have to deal.

Franco-Canadian Convention.

Mr. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the ratifications in regard to the Franco-Canadian Convention have been exchanged; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay, seeing that the Convention has been approved by the Parliaments of France and Canada.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The ratifications have not been exchanged. The Convention has not yet been approved by the French Senate.

Russia and Persia.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has yet received any information as to the recent punitive operations by Russian troops within Persian territory.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have received no official account of the punitive expedition under General Snarski, but it would appear that all the Russian demands were agreed to before it was necessary for him to take action.

Disinfection of Imported Wool.

*Mr. REES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether it is proposed to bring foreign wool under the same regulations as regards disinfectants as horse-hair imported from China, Siberia, and European Russia.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): I beg to answer this Question on behalf of my right hon. friend. It would not be practicable, according to the information at present available, to apply the same regulations as regards disinfection to wool as to horse-hair. As I said in reply to my hon. friend's previous Question, the question of disinfection of dangerous wool is receiving constant attention, but matters are not yet ripe for making any addition on this point to the existing wool regulations.

Motor Omnibus Speeds.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the danger to the public created by the high speed of motor omnibuses in the streets, he will consider the advisability of introducing legislation for the abolition of the journey system which obtains in the conditions of service of the motor 'busmen.

MR. GLADSTONE: I do not think the danger from motors in London is limited to motor omnibuses, nor do I think that fresh legislation should be considered in relation to them alone. The speed of all classes of motors is a growing difficulty and danger, and more stringent action may have to be taken. I am not at present prepared to say more as to that, but I should like to remind the hon. Member that local authorities can under the Motor Car Act apply to the Local Government Board to fix a lower speed limit for specified portions of their areas.

MR. BOWERMAN asked if the right hon. Gentleman did not consider that the system of payment by journeys was calculated to increase the speed of motor omnibuses beyond the speed limit, and would he, in case of legislation being introduced, consider that point.

MR. GLADSTONE: Of course, that point is an important one, but I see that the City authorities are taking action, and I do not see why the London County Council should not do so.

MR. CATHCART WASON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the Local Government Board, by the issue of a circular, had distinctly discouraged the application of authorities for a lower speed limit.

MR. GLADSTONE: No, Sir.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Well, they have done so.

Deportation of Aliens.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the number of aliens convicted in the United Kingdom of serious offences and to the comparatively small number who are recommended for deportation, he will direct the attention of the Criminal Courts to the desirability of recommending deportation wherever this can be done.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have already taken steps in the direction desired by the hon. Member. He has no doubt seen the statement with regard to the expulsion of aliens, which I laid on the Table some time ago together with the annual Report of the Inspector under the Aliens Act, in which questions are raised as to the relation between the convictions of aliens and recommendations made for their expulsion. Copies of that statement have been printed separately and circulated by me to Judges, and to all Courts of Quarter Sessions and Summary Jurisdiction in England and Wales, and to police authorities. Copies have also been circulated in Scotland and Ireland.

MR. CLAUDE HAY asked whether it was a fact that some magistrates had not made these recommendations because they said they had been discouraged by the Home Secretary's refusal to carry them out.

MR. GLADSTONE: No single magistrate, to my knowledge, has made that observation, and, if he had, he would be entirely in error.

Patents Act—German Manufactures.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any, and, if so, what, reply has been made to the representations received by His Majesty's Government as to the effect of the Patents Act, 1907, upon German manufactures.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The only communication received from the German Government on the subject of the Act referred to is an inquiry as to whether, in the view of His Majesty's Government, the provisions of Section 27

(1) of the Act are consistent with the provisions of the Industrial Property Conventions. In the opinion of the Government the section in question fully complies with the requirements of those Conventions, and the German Government have been so informed.

Franco-Canadian Convention.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will call for reports from our consuls in Austria, Switzerland, Japan, and other countries as to the effect upon the trade of those countries with Canada of the extension to them of the concessions of the Franco-Canadian Convention, in order that British manufacturers may estimate the increased competition they will have to meet in the Canadian market.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am not convinced of the advantage of calling for such reports. The character and extent of the existing trade of Canada with the countries to which the hon. Member refers is shown in the Canadian Trade Statistics, and these are the subject of constant attention at the Board of Trade; it is not possible to forecast the effects of reductions in particular duties, but developments will be very carefully watched.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: But would it not be of considerable advantage to the manufacturers of this country to have some such reports?

MR. CHURCHILL: As I have indicated in my Answer, all developments are carefully watched and reports are made from time to time.

Franco-Canadian Convention and Austrian Trade.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the tariff advantages to be derived by Austria in Canada under the operation of the new Franco-Canadian Convention, the Austrian Government has collected for exhibition in Vienna 15,000 samples of manufactured articles in demand in Canada, each provided with a statement of its origin, price, and other explanations for the information of Austrian exporters; and whether His Majesty's Government is contemplating a similar exhaustive collection for the information of British manufacturers trading with the Dominion.

MR. CHURCHILL: I understand that no collection of samples of Canadian manufactured articles is being exhibited in Vienna by the Austrian Government, but that an Austrian merchant has placed some samples on view at the Commercial Museum in that city. The Board of Trade are about to appoint a Trade Commissioner, who will reside in Canada, and one of his duties will be to forward samples of goods likely to be in demand in Canada, for the purpose of being exhibited in the sample-room of the Commercial Intelligence Branch of the Board of Trade in the City of London.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the Commissioner will take up his duties, in view of the urgency of the matter?

MR. CHURCHILL: I hope that in the course of the next month I shall be able to make the appointment.

Food Price Comparisons.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the average price of the 4lb. loaf in Great Britain from 1st January, 1908, to 30th May, 1908, and the average price of a similar weight of white and brown bread in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna during the same period.

I beg also to ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the average price per pound of butchers' meat, viz., beef, mutton, and pork, in Great Britain from 1st January, 1908, to 30th May, 1908; and the average price for similar articles in Paris, Berlin, and Vienna during the same period.

MR. CHURCHILL: The particulars specified by the hon. Member in his two Questions, in regard to retail prices of bread and meat in certain foreign capitals, are not all at the moment available. I am endeavouring to complete my information on the subject, and will communicate with him as soon as I am in a position to do so.

MR. H. C. LEA: When he has the information, will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to publish it throughout the country so as to try and counteract the lies being gramophoned every night by the Tariff Reform League?

[No Answer was returned.]

Electric Lighting Account Audits.

MR. CLELAND (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the professional auditors employed by the South London Electric Supply Corporation have been appointed official auditors of the same accounts for the purposes of the Board of Trade audit; whether these auditors have failed to question the charging to capital account of certain proportions of the salaries of the company's permanent officials, a practice which the Local Government Board declines to allow local authorities to pursue; whether this company has also charged directors' fees to capital account, and has made an inadequate depreciation provision; and whether, in view of the fact that capital expenditure is always an important factor in determining the price a local authority has to pay for a company's undertaking, the Board of Trade will in future appoint independent official auditors other than those employed by the companies, and will make regulations under its statutory powers with the object of ensuring that the audit shall be efficient and effective.

MR. CHURCHILL: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The auditors have reported that they see no reason to question the principle upon which a proportion of salaries of officials has been charged to capital account in respect of the time occupied by them on capital works. The Board of Trade are in communication with the Local Government Board as to the practice adopted in that Department. The auditors have called attention to the fact that a sum in respect of directors' fees charged to capital account in and before the year 1900 still remains in the account. They do not consider that the provision made for depreciation is inadequate. The Board of Trade have at various times endeavoured unsuccessfully to induce the company to remove from capital account the charge for directors' fees, but they have no power to enforce an auditor's recommendation. As stated in a reply given by me to my hon. friend the Member for North Paddington on Monday last, the arrangement made for the audit of the accounts for 1907 is being carefully watched, in case it should be necessary to make any changes. The Board of Trade have issued instructions to the auditors appointed by them with the object of ensuring that the audit shall be efficient and effective.

MR. SEAVERNS (Lambeth, Brixton) asked if it was not necessary in the public interest that the accountants employed by the Board of Trade should, by the terms of their agreement, be prevented acting for other bodies?

MR. CHURCHILL replied that the arrangements have been made for this year, and no steps could be taken till the time came for fresh arrangements to be made. There were special reasons to be considered in this matter.

Canada and the Patents Act.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the unanimous resolution of the Imperial Conference, 1907, in favour of such uniformity as may be practicable in the granting and protection of trade marks and patents within the British Empire, and in view also of the effect of The Patents Act, 1907, upon Canadian manufactures, such as agricultural machinery, he can see his way to make proposals to the Canadian Government of a reciprocal character affecting the validity of patents in both countries.

MR. CHURCHILL: It is proposed to submit the question of the best means of carrying out the resolution of the Imperial Conference to which my hon. friend refers, to a Committee in connection with the Imperial Secretariat, whose duty it will be to ascertain the views of the several self-governing Colonies on the whole subject. In the meanwhile it would be premature for His Majesty's Government to make any such proposals as are suggested by the hon. Member to any single Colony.

Wage Census.

*SIR CHARLES W DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade when the result of the Wage Census of 1906 will be published, so as to place the House in possession of figures later and more accurate than those of the previous Wage Census of 1886, needed for the discussion of the Old-Age Pensions Bill.

MR. CHURCHILL: I fear that it will be quite impossible to publish the results of the Wages Census in time for the discussion of the Old-Age Pensions Bill. The preparation of the Report is being proceeded with as rapidly as possible, and it is hoped that the first volume dealing with the textile trades will be issued before the end of the current year.

Atlantic Cables off the Irish Coast.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the cable steamer "Buccaneer" has reported by wire that between the hours of 4.25 a.m. and 2.20 p.m. on the 9th instant she hailed four steam trawlers trawling off the south-west coast of Ireland between latitude 51°54′ and 51°59′ and longitude 10°45′ and 11°44′, in which small area at least five cables belonging to two Atlantic companies are laid; that these few cables represent a value of over £2,000,000; and whether he is able to make any further statement as to the measures His Majesty's Government are taking to safeguard these British interests, and to prevent the inconvenience to the general community arising from breaks in the cable communications.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have seen in the newspapers a report to the effect of my hon. friend's statement, and I have had the opportunity of inspecting some samples of broken cable, with portions of a trawler's net adhering to it, which were picked up by another cable-repairing ship in the region in question. I understand that there are legal and other difficulties in the way of action under the Submarine Telegraph Act, and as several Departments are interested in this matter I am considering with my colleagues the question of appointing a small Inter-Departmental Committee to examine it, with instructions to report as soon as possible.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): Would it not be possible to buoy these lines? I am sure the trawlers are equally anxious to keep clear of them.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am told that there are reasons of a naval and military character against the adoption of that course.

*MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman was aware that attempts had been made to buoy these particular cables, and the buoys had been floating about—some of them off the coasts of his own constituency; and was it not a fact that those trawlers were also carrying on their depredations within the three-mile limit, and thereby doing a good deal of harm to the local fishermen?

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS asked whether it would not be possible to send a gunboat to warn these trawlers.

MR. CHURCHILL said he was obliged for the information given him by the hon. Member for Kerry. Wth regard to the movements of the Fleet, Questions should be addressed to the First Lord of the Admiralty.

Harold Wood Convalescent Home.

EARL WINTERTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if his attention has been called to the action of the West Ham Council in acquiring a piece of land in the centre of Harold Wood, for the purpose of erecting a fever hospital; whether he is aware that the inhabitants of the village and the local district council are strongly opposed to the scheme; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.): The Local Government Board have received an application for sanction to the borrowing of money by the town council for the purchase of the land mentioned for a convalescent home in connection with their fever hospital. The Board are aware of the opposition to the proposed purchase, and they have caused a local inquiry to be held by a medical inspector. They are now awaiting his report.

Tuberculous Milk Dangers.

Mr. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the recent circular of the United States Department of Agriculture showing the danger of infection from butter made from tuberculous milk, he will, in his promised Milk Bill, make provision to prevent the sale of such butter.

Mr. MASTERMAN: My right hon. friend has seen the circular referred to. He will consider the point raised by the hon. Member, but the Bill which he proposes to introduce will endeavour to prevent the supply of milk from tuberculous cows, and thus to prevent also the sale of butter made from such milk.

Clerks of the Supplementary Establishment.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he will state when a reply is to be expected to the memorial sent in during August, 1907, by the clerks of the supplementary establishment, in which they drew attention to the stagnation, and suggested a remedy on the lines of the reorganisation which was adopted in the Exchequer and Audit Office.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am considering the Memorial, and I hope to be in a position to reply to it before long. As my hon. friend may suppose, the period since August, 1907, has been one of extreme pressure.

Secretary's Office, G.P.O.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the vacancy on the higher division of the secretary's office, created by the promotion of Mr. Kidner to be assistant director of the investigation branch, after less than six years service, is to be filled by the promotion of an experienced clerk of the supplementary establishment, in order to relieve to some slight extent the stagnation which exists on that establishment.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: In considering how to fill the vacancy to which the hon. Member refers, my object will be to secure the greatest efficiency of the service and not to afford promotion to a particular branch of the establishment.

Glasgow Hospitals and the Telephones.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that the infirmaries in Glasgow have always enjoyed free telephonic service as a gift from the National Telephone Company, and from the Corporation telephone department, but that now when the Government have taken over the corporation telephone department they have intimated that they will no longer continue this gift, and will in future charge the infirmaries full ordinary rates; and whether, in view of the fact that the National Telephone Company can see their way to continue this privilege, his department will also do so.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am in communication on this subject with the authorities of the infirmaries and with the National Telephone Company.

Stoke-on-Trent—Postal Employees' Wages.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has received a memorial from the officers and servants in the postal district of Stoke-on-Trent complaining of the method employed in deciding the classification of the district; whether such memorial describes in detail a list of slum property in the Hanley district selected by the officers appointed to inquire into the rents and rates paid for artisan house accommodation; and what action, if any, it is proposed to take to rectify these alleged grievances.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am requesting the Board of Trade to make further inquiry into the cost of living at Stoke-on-Trent. Any information forwarded to me will, of course, be placed at the disposal of the Board of Trade.

Mr. JOHN WARD: Has the right hon. Gentleman received the memorial?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I understand that a memorial has been sent through the men's association, and I have promised to inquire into it.

Stoke-on-Trent Post Office.

Mr. JOHN WARD: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the date upon which it is proposed to complete the new Post Office at Stoke-on-Trent; and whether he can give the rates of wages paid by the contractor to the different grades of workmen employed upon its construction.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is hoped that the new office will be ready about April next. The building is being erected by the North Staffordshire Railway Company, and I have no information as to the rates of wages paid by the Company's contractors.

Mr. JOHN WARD: Then are we to take it that when for the convenience of the Department a building is erected, the Department take no cognisance of the wages paid to the workmen?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: We have no official knowledge, but if any facts are brought to our notice they would be inquired into.

*Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): In view of the numerous complaints in this House of the evasion of the Fair Wage Resolution on Government buildings does not the right hon. Gentleman think it desirable to procure information as to wages before work is commenced?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: The contractor in this case is not our contractor in the ordinary sense, but still I am willing to inquire into any facts laid before me.

Post Office Estimates.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state when the House will have an opportunity of discussing the Post Office Estimates.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: No date has yet been fixed for the Post Office Estimates. But I do not, in any case, propose to take them until I have been able to issue the final Classification for the Offices.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: When will the final Classification be issued?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: As soon as possible. The matter is very complicated and it has to go to the Treasury.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Will it be within the next two or three weeks?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It will be before the end of the session so as to give the House an opportunity of discussing it if it is so desired.

Post Office and the London and North Western Railway Company.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether the London and North Western Railway Company have now agreed to provide the nine additional facilities and improvements asked for by the Post Office in their letter of 22nd January last to the London and North Western Company; and, if not, can he state whether the payment of £5,500 a year which the Treasury assented to be made by the Post Office to the railway company in consideration of such facilities and improvements is being paid to the company as from 1st April last.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Of the improvements finally agreed upon some have already been carried out. Others have been arranged for and will be carried into effect as soon as possible.

The payment of £5,500 a year will be made by the Post Office to the Company as from 1st April last.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry): Have the nine specific Post Office requirements been agreed to or have other points been substituted for any of them? Will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table the whole of the correspondence?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I should like to have notice as to the correspondence. As to the nine points, seven have been agreed to, but two have not been found practicable. But we are getting value for our money.

Mr. MOONEY: Have the Company agreed to provide additional facilities for sorters?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: That matter is still under consideration.

Mr. MOONEY: They have definitely declined.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think not.

Mr. MOONEY: They have done so in a published letter.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I should like notice of the Question.

St. James' Palace—Fire Precautions.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works what measures have been taken to protect St. James' Palace with fire alarms according to last year's Estimates.

*The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale): A number of call bells have been provided which give the alarm simultaneously in the guard-room, the police room, and the turncock's room.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Has all the money voted in the Estimates been expended?

*Mr. HARCOURT: I have provided all the calls necessary, and have done so for less than the amount voted.

Supply of Horses.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give any information as to the steps that are being taken with regard to the adequate supply of horses in this country.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somersetshire, S.) replied that the matter was still under consideration.

Earl WINTERTON: Did not the hon. Baronet in April last say in answer to me that an announcement would shortly be made on the subject?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: As far as my recollection goes I have always said that the matter is under consideration.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Can the hon. Baronet really give no idea when a solution will be arrived at? It is a very pressing matter.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: I said the other night the question was being considered by the War Office and the Board of Agriculture, and until they came to a conclusion it was impossible to make any statement.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Did not the Secretary for War inform the House that the matter was no longer in his hands?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to act on the Report of the Horse Breeding Commission?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY asked for notice.

Afforestation in Scotland.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in connection with the purchase of Inverlever, in Argyllshire, for the purposes of afforestation, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests propose to purchase from the Duke of Argyll a feu duty of £64 per annum, for which the price asked is £2,110, or thirty-three years' purchase; whether this is the market price at present for feu duties in Scotland; and, if not, will he see that the nation does not pay more than the ordinary buyer.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): The sum of £2,110 covers the redemption of casualties of superiority as well as the feu duties referred to in the Question, and the Commissioners of Woods inform me that they are not paying more than the present market price of feu duties and casualties in Scotland, or more than the price at which they themselves are accustomed to sell feu duties and casualties of a similar kind.

Afforestation in Wales.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, whether it is intended to acquire land in Wales for the purpose of afforestation.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The Commissioners of Woods do not at present contemplate acquiring any more land in Wales for the purpose of afforestation. The area which has been acquired within the last few years for that purpose amounts to 600 acres.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): Will the Department use the land it already possesses in Wales for afforestation, apart from the recent purchases?

*MR. HOBHOUSE: A Question was asked as to that a fortnight ago, and on inquiry I found that the only land in that particular case was quarry land.

MR. C. E. PRICE: That is not the case.

Sugar Rebate.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received a copy of a Resolution passed by the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce advocating a rebate, representing the difference between the old and the new duty, on stocks of duty-paid sugar and glucose held by dealers on 18th May; and whether he will, on reconsideration, make the concession to meet the hardship.

MR. HOBHOUSE (for Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE): My right hon. friend has received a copy of the Resolution referred to. He regrets that he has nothing to add to the numerous statements which he has already made in the House upon this subject.

Isle of Man and Old-Age Pensions.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the inclusion of the Isle of Man within the scope of the Old-Age Pensions Bill is contemplated by the local government; if not, will he state the reasons for non-inclusion; and whether he will consider the advisability of suggesting this extension of the benefits of the measure.

MR. HOBHOUSE (for Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE): I am not aware of the intentions of the Government of the Isle of Man. It is, of course, for the Legislature of that island to consider the desirability of enacting a similar measure.

Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, with reference to the Local Government Board inquiry into the overcrowding and under-staffing of Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow, how the local authority has dealt with the officials found by the Commissioners of the Local Government Board to be responsible, viz., the medical superintendent, the medical officer of health, and the matron.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): After full and careful consideration, the conclusions come to by the local authority were as follows:—The medical superintendent was put on six months probation. The explanation made to the local authority by the medical officer of health was considered satisfactory. The matron, having expressed regret for the conduct to which exception had been taken, was allowed to retain her position.

Highland Schools and Gaelic Teachers.

MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing those schools in Highland counties in which Gaelic-speaking teachers are considered necessary and desirable, respectively, and indicating the schools in each category which have Gaelic-speaking teachers on their staff.

MR. SINCLAIR: The question of whether in a particular school the employment of a Gaelic-speaking teacher is either (1) necessary, or (2) desirable, lies within the discretion of the school board of the district, and it would serve no good purpose to make a return stating merely the Department's opinion on the point. Where the Department have reason to think that there is a specially strong case for the employment of a Gaelic-speaking teacher, they will put their views before the school board for their consideration.

Glasgow Prisoner's Attempt to Escape.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been drawn to the death in Glasgow of a superintendent of police who was at the time conveying in a cab a prisoner to Duke Street prison; whether he is aware that the prisoner could easily have escaped under the circumstances, but preferred to tend the dying man; and whether, in view of these facts, he will mitigate the sentence on the prisoner of sixty days' imprisonment.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have made inquiries regarding the case referred to by my hon. friend. The prisoner escaped on arriving in Glasgow, but after an exhausting chase by the superintendent, in which the railway officials joined, he was recaptured. Shortly afterwards the superintendent died from heart failure. Under these circumstances I see no reason to interfere with the sentence.

Insanitation in Stornoway.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that there have been numerous complaints from the inhabitants of Stornoway in regard to the insanitary conditions arising from the dumping of refuse on the Alexandra Embankment, Stornoway; and will he take such steps as may be necessary to secure an abatement of the nuisance.

MR. SINCLAIR: The attention of the Local Government Board has been drawn to this matter and they are in communication with the sanitary authorities on the subject.

MR. WEIR: We have been raising this question for the last three years, and can get no satisfaction from the local authority. Will the right hon. Gentleman take care no time is lost in dealing with the insanitary condition of Stornoway?

MR. SINCLAIR: I have no reason to think any time has been lost.

MR. WEIR: Three or four years have, Sir.

Harvey Estate, Buttevant, Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the proceeding on the Harvey estate, Ballymague, Buttevant, County Cork, in which the receiver, having been paid the half-year's rent in May, 1908, is now pressing the tenants for immediate payment of the running half-gale which accrued forty or fifty years ago; and whether the Estates Commissioners are taking any steps to purchase this estate.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am informed that the estate in question is under the Land Judge's Court. The rental of the four tenants is £232, and during the past twelve months only £159 have been paid. The receiver has, in accordance with his duty, applied to the tenants for the payment of the rent due on the last gale day. No hanging gale is recognised on the estate. The Estates Commissioners have taken no proceedings for the purchase of the estate.

MR. FLYNN: How can I get into communication with the Land Judges themselves?

Mr. BIRRELL: If the hon. Gentleman wishes I will communicate with them.

Inspection of Irish Schools.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the recently issued Report for 1907 of the Intermediate Education Board of Ireland, in which they again call attention to the urgent necessity for a permanent system of inspection in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1900; is he aware that the Irish Government in 1902 professed that it was entirely in favour of a system mainly founded on inspection, and that the Board have repeatedly pointed out the defects of the present system of examination alone, and state that it is perpetuating a false and corrupting conception of the real needs of education; and if he can explain what reasons have prevented the Irish Government from putting into operation the Act of 1900.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Report in question is engaging my attention. The Irish Government are now, as they were in 1902, entirely in favour of a system mainly founded on inspection. Temporary inspectors were in fact appointed in the years 1901, 1902, and 1903, and the Government were prepared to approve of the re-appointment of temporary inspectors for 1904 and subsequent years. The Intermediate Board declined to re-appoint temporary inspectors, being of opinion that a permanent inspectorate should be appointed, but the Irish Government felt unable to agree to the appointment of permanent inspectors until the respective parts to be played by inspection and examination in the distribution of State aid to intermediate schools should be determined. The entire matter, however, is again under consideration, and I am not without hope that it may be found possible to arrive in the near future at a conclusion which will secure the speedy appointment of inspectors.

Mr. FLYNN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware the Act of 1900 was founded on the Report of the Intermediate Education Commission, which reported in 1899 strongly in favour of a system of inspection?

Mr. BIRRELL: I have the whole question under consideration.

Belfast Health Commission Report.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he could state the probable cost of the Belfast Health Commission; whether he is aware that the Health Committee of the Belfast Corporation refused to recommend the corporation to take the responsibility for the publication of the Report of the Commission; and whether the Local Government Board would take any steps to see that the recommendations of the Commissioners were carried out.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board are not yet in a position to estimate the cost of the Belfast Health Commission, as the expenses of printing remain to be ascertained. The Public Health Committee of the Belfast Corporation refused to recommend the corporation to take the responsibility of printing additional copies of the Report for public circulation, but the Report has since been laid upon the Table of the House, and copies will thus become available. As regards the hon. Member's concluding inquiry, I can only refer him to my previous Answer, namely, that having regard to the many important recommendations made by the Commission, the corporation must be allowed a reasonable time for decision before the Local Government Board can take action.

Drainage of the Bann.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any further action has been taken, or is contemplated, by the Government with regard to the drainage of the River Bann; what is the present position with regard to it; and whether he is prepared to make any statement on the matter.

Mr. BIRRELL: The question of the Bann drainage remains in the position in which it was when I made a statement on the subject in the debate on Supply on 25th July last. Briefly, the position is that Sir Alexander Binnie recommended the execution of works for improving the drainage of the Bann at an estimated cost of £76,000. Mr. Bell, the valuer employed by the Government to estimate the value of the improvements which would be effected by these works, fixed the annual increased value at £750. That is to say, even if the works could be executed for the sum named by Sir A. Binnie—and there is reason to apprehend that they would cost much more—the return upon the capital expenditure would be rather less than 1 per cent. In the circumstances the Government have not considered it feasible or desirable to proceed with the scheme.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that the drainage of both the Bann and the Barrow is one of the most pressing needs of Ireland? Cannot he hold out hope of something being done?

MR. BIRRELL: I am not likely to forget either the Bann or the Barrow.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Or the Scariff?

MR. BIRRELL: I can give no pledge, but I hope something will be done soon.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I will remind the right hon. Gentleman from time to time.

Derrytrasna Election.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that on 27th May, at the ballot proceeding for the election of rural councillors, a Roman Catholic clergyman, named McPolin, forced his way into the polling booth at Derrytrasna schoolhouse, in the county of Armagh, not being agent for either party, and insisted on his right to remain there, in defiance of the constable in charge and of the presiding officer, and was present in the booth without any declaration of secrecy while several illiterate voters were voting, stating that he was entitled to be present as a priest; and if the Government will take action in the matter, with a view to prevent such clerical intimidation from influencing the humbler class of voters.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board have ascertained from the presiding officer that on the occasion in question the Rev. Mr. McPolin entered the polling booth and claimed the right to be present, upon the ground that the schoolhouse which formed the polling booth was his property. The presiding officer explained to the reverend gentleman that he had no right to be present and could not be allowed to remain, and he then left. No illiterate person voted while he was present and no attempt to intimidate voters was made.

Trades Preparatory School, Portadown.

MR. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether his attention has been called to the proposal to close the Trades Preparatory School in Portadown because of the scarcity of pupils; whether he is aware that the fees charged are too high for the working classes to pay; and, if so, whether, as the people of Portadown are anxious that the school should be continued, he will consider a means by which the fees may be reduced and a greater local interest aroused in the school.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): There is no official proposal to close the school in question. The advisability of doing so has been discussed by the Committee, and the Assistant Secretary for Technical Instruction has met the Committee twice recently to consider what means are possible for improving the attendance. At these meetings means were suggested by which greater local interest might be aroused, and the Committee were informed that the Department were of opinion that a lower fee might with advantage be charged.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): Is it intended to lower the fee?

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: The relation of the Department to the Committee is purely advisory,

Frauds in connection with Irish Produce.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether the attention of the Department has been drawn to the allegation that large quantities of margarine and milk-blended butter are being sold as pure Irish butter in Scotland, and particularly in the West of Scotland; whether he has any information showing that local inspection is insufficient and prosecutions few; and whether he will consider the importance of increasing the Department's staff of inspectors in order that the interests of Irish agriculturists may be protected.

Mr. T.W. RUSSELL: The question of the sale of margarine as Irish butter, which is very general in the West of Scotland, has been engaging the attention of the Department for some time, and four prosecutions for this offence were recently and successfully undertaken in Glasgow by them. They understand that several prosecutions under the Margarine Act have recently been instituted by the Glasgow local authority. No complaint has reached the Department regarding the sale of milk-blended butter as Irish butter. It would be wholly impossible for the Department to undertake to enforce the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts throughout Great Britain with respect to frauds in connection with Irish butter. In the last resort we shall have to rely largely on the local authorities. By friendly negotiations with those bodies it will probably be possible for our officers to induce them to co-operate more effectively than at present in the suppression of such frauds. The matter will continue to receive attention, and the Department a few days ago increased their staff in Great Britain by the appointment of two additional assistant inspectors.

In reply to a Question by Mr. Flynn—

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said he was aware there was a considerable amount of fraud in connection with Irish produce in Great Britain, and the Department was doing its best to cope with it.

Status of Government Departments.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Committee which is to be appointed to consider the *status* of the Board of Trade and Local Government Board will consider also the claims of the Post Office Department, which is much larger than either the Board of Trade or the Local Government Board, and employs a far larger number of persons of every grade of the Civil Service, established and unestablished; whether pressure of work upon the Postmaster-General has necessitated his deputing a share of his Ministerial duties to the Master of the Horse; and whether the salary of the Postmaster-General will, in view of the recent increase of the salaries of certain Ministers, remain at £2,500.

The PRIME MINISTER and FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.): The *status* of Departments other than the Board of Trade and Local Government Board (including the Post Office) will be fully considered.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Under what statute does the Master of the Horse exercise the duties delegated to him by the Postmaster-General?

Mr. ASQUITH: It is not a matter which depends on a statute at all. The Master of the Horse is a member of the Government, and he happens to represent that particular Department in the House of Lords.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Who gives the Master of the Horse power to sign legal documents dismissing officers of the Post Office?

Mr. ASQUITH: That depends on what power is delegated to him by the Postmaster-General.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Will the right hon Gentleman consider the advisability of changing the title Master of the Horse to Foreman of the Garage?

Mr. SLOAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that although Members of the House have for the past few months been in communication with the Postmaster-General that right hon. Gentleman only yesterday said he knew nothing about it?

Mr. ASQUITH: As far as I know, every Minister attends to every communication addressed to him.

Mr. SLOAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman take care that communications addressed to the Postmaster-General reach him?

*Mr. SPEAKER: We cannot go into that here.

Natal Indemnity Act.

Mr. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will give an assurance that the assent of His Majesty's Government to an Act of Indemnity for Natal will not be given before the House of Commons has had an opportunity of discussing the subject.

Mr. ASQUITH: Before the assent of His Majesty's Government to any legislation of this kind is given, I will take care, as I have already intimated, that the Colonial Office Vote shall be put down and an opportunity given for discussing the matter.

Mr. G. GREENWOOD: When is the Colonial Vote likely to be taken?

Mr. ASQUITH: I cannot say precisely. I hope in the next two or three weeks.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill.

Mr. LEVERTON HARRIS: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he can now state upon what day the Second Reading of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill will be taken.

Mr. ASQUITH: We hope to take the Second Reading next Monday. I think one day ought to suffice for that stage.

Scottish Estimates.

Mr. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can yet say when the Scottish Estimates will be taken.

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes, Sir, next Thursday.

Mr. MORTON: May I ask if, bearing in mind that the greater part of the Scottish Estimates have not been discussed in this Parliament, a second day could not be given?

Mr. ASQUITH: All I can say is that sufficient unto the week is the Supply thereof.

Mr. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether Scotland is not entitled to the same privileges as Ireland, which has two days for Supply?

[No Answer was returned.]

Licensing Bill.

Mr. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, having regard to the importance of the matter and the widespread interest felt therein, he can now inform the House of the intentions of the Government as to the further progress of the Licensing Bill before the House adjourns for the recess.

Mr. ASQUITH: It is the intention of the Government to begin the Committee stage of the Licensing Bill before the adjournment, but I cannot at present give any assurance as to the amount of progress which will be made.

Mr. LEVERTON HARRIS: Can the Prime Minister tell us when we are likely to adjourn?

Mr. ASQUITH: I have already said that we hope to adjourn at the end of July, but I am not in a position definitely to pin myself to it.

English Land Valuation Bill.

Mr. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will state when he is expecting to be able to introduce the Land Valuation Bill for England and Wales.

Mr. ASQUITH: I hope very soon, but I cannot name any exact date.

Mr. TREVELYAN: Will it proceed on the same lines as the Scottish Bill?

Mr. ASQUITH: That does not quite arise out of the Question, but when the Bill is introduced the nature of its provisions will, of course, be made clear.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St Augustine's) asked as to the business for next week, and if two days could not be allowed for the consideration of the Second Reading of the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill. He suggested that the right hon. Gentleman should consult the usual channels of reference as to the number of Members who desired to speak.

MR. ASQUITH: In view of the long period of time that this subject has been hanging over the country, I should have thought that one day would have been quite sufficient, and I hope it will be found to be so. The Second Reading of this Bill will be the business for next Monday. On Tuesday and Wednesday we propose to have the first and second of the allotted days for the Committee stage of the Old-Age Pensions Bill; on Thursday, there will be Scottish Estimates, and on Friday, the consideration of private Members' Bills.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 183.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 183.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 268.]

MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL.

Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 184.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 184.]

Bill [not amended] to be taken into consideration upon Tuesday next.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added the following Member to Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Coroners (Ireland) and of the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Bills): Mr. Edward Barry.

Report to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY COURTS BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 269.]

NEW BILLS.

TRAFFIC REGULATION (METROPOLIS) BILL.

"To give the Commissioners of Police power to prescribe the routes of Metropolitan stage coaches," presented by Mr. Carr-Gomm; supported by Mr. Brodie, Mr. Bowerman, Sir William Bull, Mr. Schwann, Mr. William Pearce, and Mr. Bertram Straus; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 270.]

BEE PEST (IRELAND) BILL.

"To prevent the spread of Bee Pest or Foul Brood in Ireland," presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 271.]

DEBATES REPORTS.

Ordered, That Mr. Charles Allen, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Cleland, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Pike Pease, Mr. John Robertson, Mr. Toulmin, and Mr. Walrond, be Members of the Select Committee. (*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

SUPPLY [12TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,005,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Grants, Pay, Allowances, Training, and Miscellaneous Charges of the Territorial Force (not exceeding 312,000 men), Imperial Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and Channel Islands and Colonial Militia, including the Permanent Staff, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909."

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) said that every one on the Opposition benches and in every part of the House would desire to discuss this exceedingly important subject of the Territorial Army in a non-contentious and even friendly spirit, but the Secretary of State for War and some of his friends had made it exceedingly difficult to do so. No Secretary for War within the memory of anyone in the House had been in a more privileged position than the right hon. Gentleman as regarded the advantage of forbearance from his opponents, but he appeared greatly to resent any serious or adverse criticism with regard to his schemes, and had even gone so far, in answer to a Question in the House, as to suggest that those who differed from him and who, not being altogether persuaded of the justice of his proposals, ventured to express these opinions in public, were guilty of unpatriotic conduct. In a speech he made on the previous day he had gone so far as to compare his critics with the descendants of Ananias.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): Some of them. I said the descendants of Ananias were not wholly extinct.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE believed that that was absolutely true, and did not apply to one side more than to another. But the right hon. Gentleman, in answer to a Question by his hon. friend the Member for the Ludlow Division of Shropshire, implied that adverse criticism of the Territorial Army was unpatriotic, and that if it was to be made at all, it should have been made last year. Those serving in the Territorial Force, or perhaps on County Associations, might feel that this was not the best time to criticise the Territorial Force, but after the right hon. Gentleman's intimation that the only proper time to criticise him was in the earliest stage of the scheme, it was apparently a case of now or never. Then there were the right hon. Gentleman's friends, and especially the strange case of *The Times* correspondent, who seemed to have established himself as a sort of Man Friday, whose business it was to pour streams of invective upon all and sundry who ventured to criticise the proposals of his beloved chief. In an article published only that morning he described those who ventured to criticise as factious politicians and suspects, and talked about captiousness and cavil being the natural provender of the intellectually indigent. He must plead guilty to that particular deficiency, but when *The Times* correspondent went a little further, and by inference accused those who criticised the Territorial Army of disloyalty to the King, he revealed a vein of frivolity hitherto unsuspected in this gifted and usually serious writer. This was a new form of evading or forestalling criticism and one which, in his opinion, was likely to arouse a great deal more suspicion than remorse and repentance in the breasts of critics like himself. What occurred to him, in reading it, was that the case of the Territorial Army must be weak indeed, and much in need of support if it required bolstering up by this form of invective. The Under-Secretary for War also accused authorities like Lord Roberts of condemning the Territorial Army, root and branch, without any consideration, simply because, certainly with some right and authority, he had ventured to criticise one particular item—the artillery. He could not believe that that sort of argument would appeal to the common sense of the country. There was no desire in any quarter to injure or hamper the development of the Territorial Army; on the contrary, the general desire was to make it, if possible, justify the hopes and claims of its author. But it was the duty of those who thought he was going the wrong way to work to tell him so. Apart from the artillery question, he was ready to believe that the underlying theory of the Territorial Army was sound and reasonable, although it was not quite such a novel and original idea as the right hon. Gentleman led them to suppose. At the same time, it was, and must remain, a theory—a skeleton without flesh and blood or clothing —unless it was galvanised into life either by largely increased expenditure or by some limited form of compulsory service. The right hon. Gentleman's present methods of stimulating that force were not only bad, but doomed to failure. Many of the best points of his original scheme had been thrown overboard already. The chief, indeed almost the only, reason why the scheme was so generously supported by serious military authorities was the general belief that it meant business, though on a comparatively small scale, the training for a maximum of a fortnight and an irreducible minimum of eight days a year. Now, under pressure of various kinds, nearly all the conditions which would have made the Territorial Army more efficient than the old Volunteers had been whittled away, and, despite concession after concession, the net result was that only 50 per cent. of the old Volunteers had re-engaged, and of those, 70 per cent. for only one year. He hoped, of course, as earnestly as the right hon. Gentleman, that all those men would come forward in time, or that their places would be taken by others; but he could not profess faith in the ingenious, and almost comical, baits held out to the reluctant Volunteer, the medals which could hardly be escaped, the illuminated certificates, and the colours. Although the last were good ideas, no doubt, they only revealed the straits to which the right hon. Gentleman was reduced in trying to persuade the Volunteers to rejoin. These expedients, he feared, would not impress those serious military authorities who originally supported the right hon. Gentleman in his scheme. The last straw was the practical abandonment of the whole position with regard to efficiency by allowing the Territorial soldier to escape the camp training altogether if he only said that by so doing he would probably lose his employment. This was simply reverting to the old conditions under which the Volunteers served for so many years, so that in spite of all this clear thinking they had simply arrived at the original state of affairs, whilst the right hon. Gentleman in the process had reduced the strength by something like 50 per cent. Everyone who had looked into the question knew that the increased expenditure on the Territorial Army must be very great. The right hon. Gentleman had established ninety-three War Offices throughout the country. They could not be run for nothing, although the attempt was being made in some of the smaller counties. He was told that the amount of work and correspondence was triplicated, and the County Associations, particularly in the smaller counties, were in a serious financial position. After making the most exhaustive examination they could of the financial Memoranda transmitted to them by the War Office, after taking stock of all their obligations, after making careful estimates of their probable income and expenditure, they found that it was practically impossible to make both ends meet. They had represented this to the War Office, who in their reply had, in effect, said that they were not to work upon estimates, that they were to carry on as best they could, at any rate, for the coming year and that eventually these matters would be adjusted in the light of actual experience. They were also told that if they overspent this year, the deficit would be deducted from their allowance next year. What persons outside of a lunatic asylum were going to assume grave and serious financial responsibilities of that kind, without any assurance that the necessary expenditure would be returned to them? He had a shrewd suspicion, as he had done from the beginning, that one of the chief objects of the Territorial Army scheme was to shift the burden of expenditure from the shoulders of the Exchequer to the county gentry. The county feeling of patriotism was an excellent stimulus, and one which had long remained, so to speak, undeveloped. But it would be a gross breach of faith to try to exploit this county feeling of patriotism in the interests of the Exchequer. He sincerely hoped that there would be a resolute and determined refusal to make any sort of private subscription to the expenditure on the Territorial Army. It was perfectly clear that more money must be found undoubtedly it would be found, but how? It was almost certain, as far as they could see, that the plan of the Government would be to find the money at the expense of the Regular Forces. The Territorial Army had been planted like an unfledged and rapidly growing cuckoo by its parent in the financial nest at the War Office, and it was elbowing out and throwing overboard the proper and legitimate inhabitants. He had grave reason to fear that when the next Army Estimates were produced in that House they would find once again that the Regular Army was to be reduced in order to find sustenance for the Territorial Force. He believed that to be a dangerous and most vicious form of finance, which in the minds of many of them constituted one of their main objections to the Territorial Army scheme. The Government was assuming gigantic and unknown financial liabilities, and there were signs that there was already going on within the Cabinet a struggle for the reduction of armaments. If they could judge from the constant appeals which were being made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Party behind him and, so to speak, behind the backs of the Cabinet, appeals which were re-echoed by the President of the Board of Trade, among others, there was only too much reason to fear that if there was to be a reduction of expenditure upon our military services, the money would come out of the Regular Army, and would be given to the Territorial Force, which was the special pet of the Secretary for War. Then there was the cheaper alternative of a modified form of compulsory service. That alternative was openly adopted as the inevitable and only desirable course by a large number of military authorities, both in the Army and among those who supported the right hon. Gentleman. Chief, perhaps, among them was *The Times* correspondent again, who was throwing off all pretence, and who, in a series of articles which had lately delighted them by their knowledge and literary ability, had openly stated that the march of events was driving them into some form of compulsory service. He specially mentioned the Territorial Artillery, and said that would necessitate the first step towards some advance in that direction. It was well known that there were high military authorities—he was not sure that they did not include some of the advisers of the right hon. Gentleman on the Army Council itself—who had only backed this scheme from the beginning because they knew that it must break down and end in a system of compulsory service, and that they would thereby attain to their ideal, which, of course, every professional soldier desired, by a flank manœuvre. The right hon. Gentleman must know that himself; if he did not, he was afraid his vision lacked that clarity which he was never tired of attributing exclusively to the workings of his own brain. Personally, he had never favoured compulsory service as a military necessity. He recognised, of course, that it had many merits from the moral and hygienic standpoints, but he was being rapidly converted to it by the right hon. Gentleman's scheme. He was convinced that the right hon. Gentleman also was becoming converted by the developments of his own policy, particularly when he had to choose between some modified form of compulsory service, an immense increase of the Army Estimates, and the total failure of his whole scheme and administration. He thought it would have been more honest if they had been told exactly whither they were going. The military experts who advised the right hon. Gentleman knew that they had launched him and his scheme upon a slippery slope which must carry him down to some form of compulsory service. The right hon. Gentleman was endeavouring to retard the rapidity of the descent by throwing dust on the surface, some of which, he was afraid, had got into the eyes of the public. He was doing everything to delay the final plunge in the hope that it would have to be taken, not by himself, but by his successors at the War Office. He did not think that that was quite playing the game; at any rate, he thought it was necessary for them to open their eyes to what was going on and what was in store for them as the result of the right hon. Gentleman's policy. He wanted to say a word or two about the much debated question of the Territorial Artillery, against which perhaps the most weighty and most persistent criticism had been directed, not only in both Houses of Parliament, but by authorities outside. He had observed with much regret that the natural suavity of the right hon. Gentleman deserted him as a rule, when this subject came under discussion. That was no doubt due to the fact that he felt that his case was rather weak. At any rate, he must refer again to the amazing reply he had given to his hon. friend the other day, in which he tried to put his critics out of court by saying that if they criticised at all they ought to have criticised last year. What did the right hon. Gentleman mean by that? He had taken the trouble to look over the debates of last year, and he found that inside Parliament the criticism was persistent and fierce, and proceeded from three ex-Secretaries of State for War, from the Leader of the Opposition, from Lord Roberts, and from Lord Denbigh, all of whom had every right to criticise, even more than the hon. and gallant Member who now sat behind the right hon. Gentleman, and who, so to speak, had been muzzled, and there were a host of minor critics like himself. He could not understand what the right hon. Gentleman meant when he talked about the critics having been silent last year. Outside the House there was a number of critics, including Sir George Marshall, Lord Wolseley, and even *The Times* correspondent who had now somewhat recanted the views which he then held. But even if there had been no criticism last year, that was no argument why they should not criticise now, and Lord Roberts and Sir George Marshall had far more experience of the actual working of artillery in war time than any of the regular advisers of the right hon. Gentleman at the War Office. He wished some Members of the House would read the absolutely annihilating debate on this subject which took place in the House of Lords on 18th of last month. There had been no attempt at a reply to that debate, except indeed by the Under-Secretary of State for War, Lord Lucas, who said that the Territorial Artillery was an experiment against which no one had produced even a *prima facie* case. Lord Lucas, a high official at the War Office, had informed them the other day that he was prepared to create an efficient field battery in a week. Had he forgotten that, in 1900, the War Office decided to raise a large number of additional Regular batteries for the war. The men were given six months training under Regular officers, the use of ranges, and every possible assistance, but they were not fit to go to the front. They were all right a year later. The regulations provided, for the recruit training alone of the Regular gunners and drivers, sixty days of five hours each. The right hon. Gentleman, no doubt, would repeat the statement which he made the previous day that the Territorial Artillery so far was a great success. They looked very well on parade, fired their guns off and so forth, but that was no test of war efficiency. There were batteries at Bulford the other day, and the Territorial Howitzer Brigade was entirely horsed by the 139th Field Battery, and was dry-nursed and assisted in every possible way by its Regular comrades. He was glad that that assistance was given, but it would not be possible in case of war and mobilisation of the Territorial Army. And even if a few batteries raised under exceptional conditions could be made even moderately efficient, it did not follow that 182 batteries could be raised and made similarly efficient. Lord Lucas had explained that the lack of instructors was due to the fact that the Regular batteries were going off on their annual training. But in the event of war the Regular batteries would be leaving the country, and where, then, would instructors be found, and what chance would there be of giving the Territorial batteries the instruction which they needed? Again, no steps had been taken to supply those batteries with their own horses. Nor had provision been made for practice ranges. The right hon. Gentleman was sending batteries to the seaside, but it was farcical to attempt to train field batteries over sea ranges. No adequate provision had been made for horses, ranges, or other absolutely essential needs, and such provision could only be made at immense extra cost. A very flattering manifesto had been addressed to the Territorial Artillery by Sir Ian Hamilton, who when in touch with the actualities of war held very different views from those expressed in that document. He was quite right, of course, in trying to encourage a force for whose creation he had no responsibility. At any rate he had stated publicly that, after six months' training, three or four of these batteries might possibly be equal to one Regular battery. He must have been speaking with his tongue in his cheek when he said it was often forgotten that in battle it might be as important that a battery might be shot at as that it might shoot; and that the Territorial gunners would be enthusiastic Volunteers, and able to fulfil that part of the artilleryman's *role* with comparatively little practice. No doubt the Territorial Artillery would be thrilled to realise that it would be their chief duty to be food for powder. If they took the trouble to read Sir Ian Hamilton's account of the Manchurian campaign, they would realise that he was asking a great deal of them. The Territorial Artillery had been condemned by practically every qualified authority. It would be comparatively harmless, however, if it did not entail the destruction or emasculation of thirty-three Regular batteries and the loss eventually of something like 2,400 Regular Artillery soldiers. It was quite impossible that those thirty-three training batteries could be made in any way efficient on the outbreak of war unless they were raised to a four-gun basis, with proper equipment and with Regular soldiers. With the same amount of money as the right hon. Gentleman proposed to spend on the Territorial Artillery he believed fifty-four batteries of Regular Artillery could be raised on a lower establishment, which, added to those thirty-three batteries which were being reduced for the purpose of training, would make up eighty-seven batteries, which, according to Sir Ian Hamilton's computation, would be equal, for purposes of war, to about 260 Territorial field batteries. Which would any general prefer in the event of war? The question did not admit of two answers. Let the Territorial Force retain the heavy batteries, which did not require the same skill in manœuvring and horsemanship, and let there be a few selected batteries of Field Artillery; but let the bulk of the Territorial Artillery be composed of Regular batteries, in pursuance of the policy to which the right hon. Gentleman gave expression when he said that in Artillery nothing but the best would do. Otherwise the result would be irremediable disaster in time of war. What was the net result of two and a half years of the right hon. Gentleman's administration? If war came at this moment the country would find that its first line had been reduced by 23,000 men, that the second line was practically gone, and that the Militia, or the greater portion of it, had been disbanded. There was, indeed, a so-called Special Reserve, which had not yet materialised, except as regards some 13,000 men; and the chief advantage claimed for that force—that it would be able to serve abroad—was neutralised by the fact that it was physically incapable of doing so. The Volunteers had been broken up, and only some 50 per cent. of them had rejoined, 70 per cent. of those for only one year. It was true they had ninety-three more War Offices, and on the other side of the balance-sheet there was a saving computed by the right hon. Gentleman at £500,000 a year, which was not a real saving, because it was largely made up of deferred expenditure. These were cold facts which he found exceedingly disquieting. The right hon. Gentleman might claim that these were satisfactory results of his two and a half years' clear thinking, that he had performed a high and patriotic achievement, and that those who presumed to criticise were base fellows, utterly devoid of patriotism, common-sense, or any other virtue; but it was alarge order to ask the country to accept that upon his mere *ipse dixit.* In default of any further explanation he could only say that to believe that this was all to the good required more faith, more childlike confidence in the infallibility of the right hon. Gentleman than he, at any rate, was able to command.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. and gallant Member began his speech by laying his rod on the back of the Military Correspondent of *The Times,* whom he described as the man at the head of the War Office. I am not responsible for, nor have I any control over, the Military Correspondent of *The Times.*

He is one of the most brilliant of our military writers, a man of immense knowledge of military affairs, and he has a pen with which he is able to defend himself. I pass from that, therefore, and come to my own humble personality. The hon. and gallant Member has accused me of having lost my temper, and of having shown signs of irritation under the burden of a failing cause. It is true that I have not succeeded in living up to my ideals. When I entered upon this office I made up my mind that three qualities were requisite—the patience of Job, the temper of a saint, and the skin of a rhinoceros. I am aware that I have fallen short of my ideals; but I have tried to live up to them, and I try now, even refraining from being led into temptation by the hon. and gallant Member. He concluded his speech by asking how the Army stands now. I will tell him. It has an organisation worked out by the General Staff—a new and efficient General Staff—which has put it into such a condition that, if war broke out, we should know exactly what were our resources, exactly where every unit and every man had to go, and what every unit and every man had to do. The different arms are proportioned one to another. We have no longer left the artillery in that state in which no provision was made for putting more than forty-two batteries in a condition in which they could go into the field. We have made up the points in which the Army was deficient, and we are putting into operation machinery which is actually created, which, if full time is given and the plant is not hurriedly pulled up by the root, will put the Army into such a position as I believe it has not been in. I am not claiming for myself any credit for that result. If I have done one thing more than another it is that, instead of setting up my own opinions on military affairs, I have taken care to follow throughout the advice of the General Staff. The organisation is the work of the General Staff—of the most competent soldiers who could be found in the Army to undertake it. And that organisation exists; but it will take time for the machinery to produce the Special Reserve, as, for instance, all the men who are necessary to mobilise the batteries. It will take time before all the details which have to be attended to — Medical, Army Service Corps, and others—are there to make the force capable of effective mobilisation in their units. And it will take time before the Special Reserve has grown up in its new form, under which there will be 101 battalions of men, under engagement to go abroad, behind the Regular battalions. It is not merely an organisation upon paper, but an organisation which, with machinery to make it real, has actually been created and is actually in successful operation at this moment. It was only on 2nd August last year that the Act was passed enabling us to put these schemes into operation; and I shall be in a position to give information as to the progress that has actually been made. The hon. and gallant Gentleman stated that there had been a loss of thirty-three Regular Artillery batteries.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: I said "emasculated."

Mr. HALDANE: "Emasculated" was his word. We shall see whether they have been emasculated or not. When I took office I asked the General Staff how many batteries of field artillery and howitzers would be necessary to mobilise six divisions, and was told that sixty-six was the proper proportion. I said, "How excellent, I have inherited ninety-nine batteries"; but the General Staff smiled, and said, "You have inherited them on paper"; and when I asked what I had in hand to mobilise these batteries I was told that I could only put forty-two in the field. When I said that that was very unsatisfactory, the General Staff agreed and said that I must set to work to convert the Garrison Artillery into men to serve the ammunition columns. They pointed out that in the South African War there was a great waste because no provision had been made for training draft batteries. The batteries at home were congested and full of men, and I was told that if we really wished to train adequately a sufficient number of men for the batteries to go with the expeditionary force we must make up our minds to take a certain number of surplus batteries and convert them into training batteries, sufficiently small to admit a large number of recruits and sufficiently large to give them an adequate training. That was the plan of the General Staff, elaborated in the Adjutant-General's Department; and the result is that, while we have not yet turned out enough men to mobilise the sixty-six batteries, the machinery is at work and is every week turning out more and more recruits, who are very well trained. The effect of adapting these batteries is not to diminish, but to increase the artillery. I do not call it emasculating batteries to turn them from a condition in which they were not of use, because they could not be mobilised, into functions of training. I am not diminishing batteries, but adding twenty-four to the existing provision of Artillery. I have not abolished a single man. Among the other unkind things that have been said is the statement that 2,400 artillerymen are scheduled for destruction. There is no foundation for that.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: It is in the Estimates.

MR. HALDANE: The 2,400 men are existing, and will go on existing until their places can be taken by four or five times their number. I will slow down recruiting for the artillery when I am provided with 15,000 men to take the places of the surplus men from the batteries and ammunition columns. What I want is sufficient men to mobilise the batteries, and would rather have a large number of men to work up through the brigade and division ammunition columns to the batteries. The 2,400 men are there at this moment, and in the artillery establishment of the Army, as a whole, there are more highly trained Regulars than when I took office.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that these 2,400 men whom we have described as scheduled for destruction will be done away with when he has five or six times the number of Special Reservists whom he proposes to enlist?

MR. HALDANE: Their places will be taken; but to state that they are scheduled for destruction suggests to the public, which is not too well informed in these matters, that we are going to strike off 2,400 trained artillerymen. [Cries of "No."] If that is not what was intended, I should be glad to know why so much has been made of it. However, Mr. Emmott, I will remember the patience of Job. The hon. and gallant Member said that these thirty-three batteries had been abolished to find money to provide for the Territorial Artillery.

MR. ARTHUR LEE dissented.

MR. HALDANE: The men and guns exist independently of the Territorial Force except to form centres from which instruction will be given to the artillery of the Territorial Force. The organisation of that artillery is entirely different. I should like to know how the hon. and gallant Member himself would have dealt with the artillery of the Territorial Force. The old Volunteers had artillery, and Lord Midleton and the right hon. Member for Croydon took credit to themselves for supplying them with artillery.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): No.

MR. HALDANE: The right hon. Member for Croydon does not take credit for it. Field artillery was given to the Volunteers, and they had a very large and miscellaneous artillery establishment. Does he really suggest, knowing how sensitive they are, that I should have said to them: "Good people, you cannot be trusted to have an Artillery organisation at all; let us sweep it away and have Regular batteries instead"? If I had done that I should have been a madman and defeated my own purpose in raising a Territorial Force.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman to sweep away anything that existed, but not to attempt to create a huge artillery that cannot possibly be efficient.

MR. HALDANE: If that means anything, it means that, although we were organising the Volunteers into a new and real military organisation corresponding to the Regular military organisation, we were to tell them that they could not be trusted with Field artillery.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Because they could not be trained.

MR. HALDANE: Has the hon. Gentleman read the articles that have appeared recently in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Post* on the training of the Territorial batteries at Aldershot and on Salisbury Plain? I think it is worth while quoting a sentence or two. The first description is that given of the training at Aldershot in the *Daily Telegraph*, which says—

> "It was really remarkable the rapidity with which the brigades picked up the instruction given them by their instructors, and how readily they applied it in practice. The officers, after a very few lessons, were able to use the scientific instruments used in field artillery work, and the non-commissioned officers and men very speedily became acquainted with the duties which they would be called upon to perform."

The same writer went on to say—

> "The first camp of the London Territorial Artillery must undoubtedly be pronounced to have been astonishingly successful, and gives promise that this branch will attain a standard of efficiency much higher than could have been hoped for. The officers and men evidently mean to do all in their power to become efficient field gunners, and if they are only afforded the opportunities they will attain this object."

Those two correspondents then go on to describe what took place on Salisbury Plain.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say were these batteries wholly composed of members of the new Territorial Force, or were they horsed and provided with riders by the Regulars?

MR. HALDANE: They were wholly provided from the new Territorial Force. [OPPOSITION cries of "Horses."] No doubt, the horses were in part—[Cries of "In part."]—I do not suppose they were entirely horsed, for we have provided £50,000 for training horses and allowances for horses in camp. I presume that to a considerable extent they were their own horses. I point out that these were the officers and men of the Territorial Force; and we at the War Office are under a deep debt of gratitude for the splendid way in which the officers of the Regular Artillery co-operated in the instruction and threw themselves into the work with a magnificent zeal, and have given us an account of what transpired, which, they say, fills them with the greatest hope that we are on the track of finding a very great addition to the artillery resources of the country. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the training of this artillery is limited to what is laid down in the Regulations. They are so keen, especially the officers, and it is true of the men also, that they are coming out and doing voluntarily a great deal of work out of time; and if they work with that energy and enthusiasm, I am inclined to think that the correspondent of the *Morning Post* was not far wrong when, in speaking of the 4th Howitzer Brigade at Salisbury, he said—

> "If it affords a fair sample of the Territorial Army, Mr. Haldane has good reason to look forward to the ultimate success of his scheme."

The reports which are coming in to us from the Regular officers are to the same effect, that the efficiency of this force in a short time of training has astonished them. But I do say this, that the new departure has such promise that if only the public have patience and give them time and support, I have myself a firm belief that we have in these batteries, in these officers, non-commissioned officers, and men a real addition to the military resources of the country. So much for the Artillery. Now I pass to one or two other points on which the hon. and gallant Member touched. He said: "Where were the horses?" We have taken in the Estimates what we are advised is a sufficiency of money for horses in camp—£5 a horse. We have also taken £50,000 in the Estimates for horses in training. The Associations have got to work out the problem of cost, and are working out the problem at this moment. If more money is wanted for the purpose we shall furnish them with it, but it is vital that we should have good horses for training.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): As a member of a County Association, I would like to know how much more money the right hon. Gentleman is prepared to give.

MR. HALDANE: If the noble Lord will go down to his Association and after going into the matter tell us what they have done, how they are getting on, and what they want, then they will find a very willing ear to listen to them at the War Office. What we want to know is the case in detail. We do not want the vague statements that the hon. and gallant Member made that they were going to be short of money. They are working out their own problem with the money we are giving them, and it will be time enough when they are short for us to consider what more to give them. It remains to be seen whether we have given them sufficient. My own impression is that they are not in need. The hon. Member asked, What about the ranges? We have provided for all that. We are making the necessary provision for that; and if the hon. and gallant Member will only have patience and not speculate on the ruin that is going to come along before we have reached the point at which the plan is going to work or not, then we shall be in a position to judge. We are just at the very beginning of things. The thing has not been in existence for more than a very short time, and the hon. and gallant Member's assertions relate to the future. The position is that what has been done not only in regard to money, but in regard to everything else, has been based upon the closest survey we could take of the situation. There is not a point in this organisation which has not been carefully thought out. It is working with as little friction as could be expected under the circumstances, so little, in fact, that I might almost say no friction. The machine has only been in operation for a few months; and all I ask is a little patience, and a little forbearance while an attempt is made, not in the interests of a Party, but in the interests of the nation, to put right what is not in a satisfactory condition. The response has been in some respects magnificent. The way the County Associations and the people of all shades of politics in these Associations have thrown themselves into the work and devoted time and labour is deserving of all praise, and shows what stuff there is in the English nation. I should regret very much if any words of mine conveyed an indication of departing from the attitude which I had formerly expressed. If I have been partisan in my speeches, I did not intend it, and I humbly apologise to the House of Commons. I am aware I can only carry the work a very little stage, and that the future working will rest with another Parliament and still another Parliament after that before the thing can be completed. Military organisation is one of the slowest businesses, and if there is anything that requires patience it is really a plan such as this. The other point which the hon. and gallant Member made was that the scheme is disappearing under concessions, but I was really puzzled to know what he was alluding to. I think it was the obligation to come into camp. From the very first moment this thing was mooted we said that as regards the obligation to come into camp, while it was necessary for us to get a complete system, that obligation would be worked in view of the practical impossibility that every citizen could come out under all circumstances. We said, when we introduced the Bill, and when it was passing through Committee, that our intention was to give instructions that, wherever a man had a *bona fide* reason for not coming—such as loss of employment, and the support of his wife and children — that should be treated as a reason why he should not come. We have worked with the employers of labour and they have met us on the whole extremely handsomely. We are acting upon this—that to tell men, when you are recruiting a new force, that you mean to enforce the legal hold over them ruthlessly is absolutely to destroy your prospects of getting your force together. We believe it better to say that we will meet them in every rational and reasonable case, and if they cannot do more, we will discharge them of any obligation to come. Further than that, I have taken that attitude with the great railway companies and employers of labour and said: "We know perfectly well that you want to send every man you can. We do not intend to put you under the legal harrow. We want you to think that, wherever your businesses will suffer from letting them come, we will relieve you from exacting presence in camp." So far from proving to be concessions which have whittled away the reality of the scheme, we believe they will be the means for getting a far fuller amount of recruiting than otherwise we could have got, and getting a far larger number of employers to our assistance than we could have got.

In conclusion, I had better tell the House of the progress of the recruiting of the Territorial Force as far as I know. We have returns of the numbers enlisted once a month, and therefore I cannot give the House any more information than I gave them a little time ago, when I furnished the figures up to 31st May, further than this, that there are always on returns which are hastily brought in at the last moment some that have not been included. There are about 4,000 who should have been included as having come in on 31st May and added to the total. Taking that, the actual strength on 31st May of non-commissioned officers and men only was 148,459; the total establishment of non-commissioned officers and men is 302,199. Therefore, there was just 49 per cent. of the force on 31st May, which was a couple of months from the time of starting, but since that time a good many more units have come in. There were then 686 units. To-day we recognise 732 units, which means an addition of somewhere near fifty more units; that is to say, 732 units out of a total of 897 have been approved. In other words, nearly 82 per cent. of the units of the force are now formed. That means a considerable addition in men since the last figures; I cannot tell how many. Each unit must have 30 per cent. of its establishment. Some of these units have a great deal more. One or two, but not many, have the full establishment, and others have a very high percentage. Therefore we may safely assume at the present time that after nearly two-and-a-half months a good deal more than half the force is recruited and in existence. It will interest the House to know of what that force consists, and I have the numbers here. We gave the Volunteers till 30th June for two reasons. In the first place, we could not enlist them until we had got the units approved. Our plan was to recognise units when they had obtained 30 per cent. of their establishment, and to begin to pay as soon as they were in a position to use it. It required time to get up the units. Therefore we gave the Volunteers three months till 30th June, partly for that reason, and partly in order that they might have time to look about. We gave the Volunteers up to 30th June to come in on terms to enlist for a year only. We knew that the great bulk of them would enlist for a year only, because we knew it would be the tendency to see how they liked it. That process has been in operation. I have told the Committee what the number of enlistments is, certainly 150,000 now, probably a great deal more. Of the total of these enlistments no less than 69 per cent. are old Volunteers who have enlisted for a year, 19 per cent. are people who have enlisted for four years, 9 per cent. are men who have enlisted for two years, and 3 per cent. men who have enlisted for three years. But the interesting feature is the way the new recruits are beginning to come in. In the month of April the men who had come in for one year only was 73,707; of those who had come in for two to four years there were 20,128; and those who have come in for a term not stated, 9,445. Of new recruits in the month of April there were only 4,936. Of new recruits in the month of May, however, we find there have come in 10,773, or more than double the number in the previous month. The new recruits altogether up to 31st May numbered 15,709; the old Volunteers taken for one year numbered 94,149; the men taken for from two to four years, 27,250; the men taken on a term we do not know, 10,388. I think it is satisfactory that we should have that marked increase in the number of recruits in the second month. Judging by the information which is reaching me, the recruits are coming in very well. So far as the camps have taken place, everything has gone rather smoothly. I saw a distinguished general of division last night who told me that the field arrangements showed a great improvement this year—because of the superior organisation—on anything that had been seen before in the same district. The total number of Yeomanry units in the Territorial Force is 56; and the Yeomanry, standing easily at the top of the list, have 53 units completed. The Artillery come very high, notwithstanding the doubts that were expressed. Of 369 possible Artillery units on the establishment, 296 have already been recognised; of 117 units of Engineers, 100 have been recognised; of 204 units of Infantry, 188 have been recognised; of 70 units of the Army Service Corps, 40 have been recognised; and of 81 units of the Royal Army Medical Corps, 55 have been recognised. Thus 732 units have been actually recognised out of a possible total of 897. Nothing but experience can tell us whether this plan will succeed. I do not think that, having regard to its novelty, having regard to the completeness of the change which in many respects has taken place, and considering all the conditions, the House or the country can regard these figures as anything else than on the whole very fairly satisfactory.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon) said he did not desire to adopt a very critical line in regard to this Vote, which did not interest him so much as other Army Votes. But there were some things which he might fairly comment upon. It was not possible for the House to deal with the whole of the Army question on a separate Vote, and that produced a tendency to discuss a subject of this kind as if it really stood by itself and could be dealt with apart from the whole question of the Army; which of course was not the case. He confessed he had listened with interest to the account of what the right hon. Gentleman considered to be the progress of the Territorial Force; but he asked what the force was going to do to make the country safer in time of war. When this proposal first came up for consideration Parliament was asked to agree to a great reduction of the Regular Army and a still greater reduction of the Militia, on the ground that the nation was going to have a less costly and more efficient fighting machine. It was to be stronger in time of war than it had ever been before. This particular force the Secretary of State had told them was "to provide garrisons, to take the place of garrisons taken away to co-operate with the Naval forces in time of war, to repel raids, and to form a big national reserve from which the Army might be expanded when great emergencies arose." How far had they got along the road they were told to travel? They had got rid of a great part of the Regular Army, and they would in a few weeks have got rid of the Militia; but he did not yet see the national reserve capable of expanding the Regular Army in time of emergency. The right hon. Gentleman had said it was not wonderful that there should have been a comparatively moderate response on the part of those who desired to join the Territorial Army in view of the entirely new character of that force. The remark seemed to have been made under a misconception. He did not think the country had quite realised how little change had been made. It was a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* We had the Volunteers under another name. We had reduced their strength by about 100,000 men. He did not, however, believe that reduction would be permanent; he believed that probably all the men would be got whom the right hon. Gentleman required. Why should they not? The conditions were the same as before and the same motive which had induced men to join the Volunteers ought to be sufficient to induce them to join the Territorial Force, since they clearly understood that they had just as little to do now as they had before. The Director of the Auxiliary Forces had himself stated that no more call was to be made upon the Territorial soldiers than upon the Volunteers; and the Duke of Argyll had told the officers of the London Scottish that they were not to be afraid, that nothing more would be asked of them than under the old conditions. Those old conditions were not satisfactory. The Commission specifically declared that the Volunteers were unfit to take the field against a foreign enemy, which was the only enemy they could meet. If they were unfit then, they were unfit now. The right hon. Gentleman had taken up the organisation of brigades and divisions formulated by the War Office in 1905. That was a great step in advance. But it was not enough to have organised brigades and divisions if they had no proper force to fill up those brigades and make those divisions. He failed to see what had been done to differentiate the Territorial Force from the Volunteers. They had no more experience in the field. They were the same officers, the same men, doing the same thing in so far as he could understand rather less time. In 1906 the right hon. Gentleman had spoken scornfully of those who declared that the Bill then before the House merited very little attention. As a matter of fact, he did not pay much attention to it, because he thought its provisions would be absolutely ineffective. As regarded camp training, the Financial Secretary had declared that men who did not want to go into camp need not do so. The right hon. Gentleman said they must only ask their soldiers to do what they were able to do. That was not the criterion by which to judge preparations for war. The question was whether what a man could do would make him an efficient soldier. It was necessary to be judicious and tender in dealing with voluntary soldiers, but it was not wise, in the interests of the nation, to tell the public they had got a thing when they had not. He failed to see that anything had been done at present to restore the great loss which they had suffered in respect to other branches of the Army. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that the Yeomanry came out at the top as regarded the number of men remaining in it. Why? Because he had practically left the Yeomanry alone. Referring to artillery the right hon. Gentleman had spoken in the first place of artillery which was not Territorial artillery at all. He thought the right hon. Gentleman had rather misled the Committee in that matter. In the period following the war fifty-five batteries were added by the Unionist Administration. When the right hon. Gentleman stated that when he came into office it was only possible to mobilise forty-two batteries, he thought some explanation was required. Between 1899 and 1905 the *personnel* of the Horse and Field Artillery was increased from 19,000 to 30,550; that was to say about 11,000 men were added. Since the war fifty-five batteries were added to the Artillery, 11,000 men, and during the whole of the time there had been a continued and rapid increase in the Reserve of the Field Artillery. So that when the right hon. Gentleman told them that in 1907 he could only mobilise forty-two batteries of Royal Horse, Artillery such a statement required a good deal of explanation. It was perfectly true that they could not mobilise batteries as they could mobilise battalions. For every man with the colours three men in the Reserve were required. The right hon. Gentleman now said that the reason why this enormous addition, larger, he supposed, than any that had ever been made before in the same period, was insufficient for its purpose was that the new quick-firing gun required two wagons per gun, and, therefore, a larger *personnel* in the ammunition column was required. But why had he never given that reason before? The statement was perfectly true, and so well was that known in the War Office that they had already begun to supplement the Regular Artillery with men from the Militia. But when all that was done—when the right hon. Gentleman took every single man he was ever likely to get from the Militia, he would still be very far short of what he wanted. When the right hon. Gentleman told them over and over again that he had not taken a man off the Artillery the statement required explanation. If they asked officers of the Army who were the best-trained men and the best men in physique in the Army they would say the men of the Royal Garrison Artillery. Yet 5,000 men had been knocked off the Garrison Artillery.

MR. HALDANE: Following out the right hon. Gentleman's own policy.

*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER said he was not questioning the policy. It might be right to reduce the Royal Garrison Artillery, but he thought the reduction had been excessive. But as a matter of fact he had not appointed General Owen's Committee nor had he given effect to its recommendations. The Garrison Artillery had been used to supplement the Royal Horse and Field Artillery. In the South African War all the heavy batteries were manned by the Garrison Artillery.

If they wanted reinforcements it was to the Garrison Artillery that they went, but now 5,000 of the best men in the Army had been disbanded. With regard to the Territorial Artillery, he had some grudge against the right hon. Gentleman, because he had always thought he had not treated him quite fairly. The right hon. Gentleman had quoted against him the advice of distinguished officers, but the advice which had been given to him was of a totally different character. That, however, was, after all, unimportant, and he would not dwell upon it. With regard to the Territorial Artillery, what was the proposal? It was a proposal which stood almost self-condemned. There was, no doubt, strong reason for making an experiment, for he believed they would get some really valuable batteries, possibly some very good batteries; but he did not think it was at all likely they would get a large number of such batteries, and on every ground of common sense he thought it would have been better to have made an experiment with regard to these batteries. His chief objection was that these batteries were being created at the expense of the Regular Artillery. If the War Office had been content to hold their hand they could establish no less than 119 Territorial field batteries, and at the same time keep the whole of the thirty-three Royal Artillery batteries up to the full establishment. Was it not infinitely better to spend £148,000, which was all that was required to keep these batteries up to the full establishment, and content themselves with the experiment of 119 Territorial batteries? But on the general question whether it was wise to create these Territorial batteries at all the right hon. Gentleman had quoted the Military Correspondents of two daily papers, but he thought there was even more important evidence. Those who heard the debate in another place must have been deeply impressed with the consensus of opinion there expressed. As to the statements of the Under-Secretary for War, it was really almost lamentable that a young nobleman should commit himself to statements so palpably grotesque. Lord Lucas went to a public gathering, at which the Secretary of State took the chair, and made the statement *urbi et orbi* that he would turn out an efficient field battery in a week. What happened? Within a fortnight this same young nobleman was chosen to become Under-Secretary for War. If appointments in the Government were to be awarded for advice of that nature, he thought they might say farewell to any improvement. There was evidence, however, which ought to have great weight with the House. They were asked to make a gigantic experiment, to make a battery on a minimum training of a fortnight. Was that possible? If it was possible, what a terrific mistake everybody else in the world was making. What were they doing in Germany, in France, in Russia, in Japan, and in Switzerland? Even now the Germans were declaring that two years was an insufficient training for artillery. France, he was told, was adding 300 field batteries to her field artillery. The Swiss, even with their original period of training greater than our own, had now doubled it. They now made the training of an officer extend over a year—400 days, and they had taken the whole control of the artillery out of the cantonment administration and placed it under the Federal administration. Last year he saw German batteries firing shrapnel. He had seen batteries in many parts of the world. He had had the opportunity of hearing the views of many officers all over the world, and his impression was that the Germans were right in devoting all this time and trouble and making sacrifices in order to obtain the results they did. He had seen artillery practice in many parts of the world, but he must admit that the practice he saw last year was of a character which made him think very seriously what would be the position of a force like that they were now asked to spend so much money on if it was opposed to an army which had this artillery as an adjunct to it. Was there not overwhelming evidence on this point? There was the unanimous opinion of every military country in the world except our own, and, indeed, he believed the real opinion of our own country was the same. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman what was the opinion of his own Inspector-General of Artillery? He had never been quoted. He knew officer after officer who had expressed in the clearest and strongest terms his doubt and alarm. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would pause and limit his proposal to an experiment. He shared the apprehension that had been expressed that this enormous expenditure was going to take money from the fighting services of the country—from the Navy first and next from the Regular Army. For over 800 years we had never had to fight a battle on our own shores. He would challenge the right hon. Gentleman to consider the following point. He supposed the Secretary for War had considered what was to be the use of the Territorial Army, supposing it came into existence and was in every way efficient and full-fledged to-morrow. He could conceive a good many hypotheses as to the kind of contest in which this country might be engaged, but as far as the Territorial Force was concerned there were only two hypotheses applicable. When this country was invaded in force—if ever it was invaded in force, then heaven help us!—we must do as other peoples had done. We must make every sacrifice, we must call out the manhood of the nation indiscriminately, we must spend money to provide batteries, forts, and defensive works, and all the paraphernalia which other nations had found it necessary to call into existence. Personally he had never been able to see that this danger was a real one. Certainly, if it was a danger, then the Territorial Army was of no use at all as a weapon which would defend us in a crisis of that kind. The other hypothesis was that of a raid. He did not know exactly what was meant by a raid, but hon. Members could define it as they pleased. He believed that if they took two dozen men, and put them into as many separate rooms, leaving each man to elaborate a plan which would be a prophylactic against a raid, there was not one of them who would design an instrument like the Territorial Army for the purpose. A raid obviously must be a warlike attack characterised by these qualities—it must be sudden, unexpected, and therefore at the beginning of a war; it must be undertaken by the best class of troops under the best class of officers; it must be an expedition composed in very large proportion of what might be called the technical army. What did that involve? The answer to that was clearly not a large, partially trained, immobile force, scattered as this force would be from John o' Groats to Land's End, with a battery here and a battery there, a gun here and a gun there, and the horses nowhere. The real prophylactic was something quite different. The real answer to a raid of that kind was the existence in this country of another force equal or superior in numbers, always mobilised and mobile, oversupplied, if they liked, with such arms as highly trained artillery and cavalry, capable of moving to any point at any time, without any notice at all. He claimed that the hypothetical students of this problem would all get something near that solution; but not one of them under any circumstances would produce a solution which corresponded in any degree with the scheme they were now asked to support. He viewed with considerable alarm this large expenditure of money on this particular force. As regarded the Territorial Army itself he was a well-wisher, but he believed that if it was encouraged and the men were given a valuable training it would be all the better; but they must weigh things in the balance, and if they were to gain something at present they must be careful that they did not lose a good deal more than they had gained. That was what he believed they were doing at the present moment. They were losing in every other part of the defensive forces; they were losing with regard to the Navy, with regard to the Army, with regard to the Militia, and, above all, with regard to the Reserve of the Regular Army. When all was said and done, and granting that everything was accomplished as it was hoped it would be, the Government had done nothing whatever to repair those very heavy losses. For these reasons he hoped the right hon. Gentleman, though he wished him well in his main enterprise, would remember that there were greater and far more important interests to be considered than even this Territorial scheme of which he was the author, and which he naturally wished to bring to its legitimate conclusion. The right hon.

Gentleman must remember that the resources of the country were limited, and that they should be applied in the first instance to those branches of the defensive forces which were really likely to be of use in war.

*Sir CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean), said that the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down must be congratulated on his observations, even by those who were most often in conflict with him. Certainly the speech which he had addressed to the House showed no falling off in the powers he had exhibited before an illness from which his recovery seemed happily complete. The Secretary for War had made a promise which he had kept not to diminish the Regular Field Artillery for a long time to come, but there was a reduction of Garrison Artillery; and while they were not creating batteries of Territorial Artillery to defend us against a foreign force, they were no doubt training a large number of individual men who could be relied upon to fill the ranks. His right hon. friend the Secretary for War had crowed very little over his success in recruiting, and he had treated the Committee so fairly that day that he thought they were all in a good humour with him, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would try to see that the views which they entertained were not based on any suspicion of his intentions, but based on an entirely different view of the theory of national defence, and the position of the Volunteers or Territorial Army. His right hon. friend knew very well that they did not want to raise questions which had been discussed on the Bill, but the idea they had in their mind was that there was being created a sort of sham army. This would never have to serve in the divisions or brigades that they were forming, but was a training school for men, and these men were to be called upon in time of war to reinforce the Army across the sea. That was an entirely different theory from the theory on which the Territorial Army rested, a theory which some people accepted, but which few people really believed. Therefore, it always came to the question how much could they afford to spend upon these luxuries such as the Territorial Army on a large scale, provided they could keep up the Fleet to the extent to which it would have to be kept up in the future. There was always this question of money. The hon. and gallant Gentleman on the front bench opposite had made a passionate attack on the Military Correspondent of *The Times*, who had a very pretty style and a very pretty pen, and who could defend himself. A distinguished Conservative once said of a distinguished French politician that he terrified his enemies because they were afraid of him in so many different ways, for he terrified them with his rapier, his pistol, his tongue, and his pen; and certainly the Military Correspondent of *The Times*, without rapier or pistol, could with his pen and his tongue defend himself. But the correspondent of *The Times* perhaps mixed his metaphors that morning in saying that the hon. Members on the front bench opposite —the writer, he thought, was alluding to the hon. and gallant Gentleman—

> "Will emulate the daughter of the horse leech and throw the blame upon the War Office."

But their view was that the War Office itself, by the constitution of the Territorial Army, was forced into playing the part of this unfortunate daughter of the horse leech. In order to make the Territorial Army what it was intended to be, they must come to see that more money would be required with which to make it something like a decent and respectable-looking Army in all its branches, but which they could not afford, given the amount they had to spend on the Regular Forces and on the Fleet. That was the whole difficulty—the question of money. Then came the question of invasion. He absolutely shared the view of his right hon. friend opposite that invasion need not be apprehended and that the Territorial Army did not exist for the purpose of meeting it; and he agreed with his second point, that if they were creating the Army against any invasion expected this was not the sort of Army they should create. He asked in the most friendly way, and not for the purpose of opposition, that the Government should give them any information they could about one portion of their scheme. The

Territorial Army was to have an organisation specially directed not so much to the repelling of invasion as to rapidly concentrating on a threatened spot. It was admitted that the Forth or Tyne, for instance, were spots where rapid concentration of highly trained men had to take place. Here they had a practical question of the value of the Territorial Artillery in time of war, in a case in which all admitted it might suddenly be called upon not only in time of war, but just before war or when war was anticipated or there was serious risk or fear of war, because there were spots such as the Forth Bridge which would have to be defended by men encamped. Skilled work was required, and the decrease of the Garrison Artillery, of course, would make it necessary to utilise the Territorial Force for this purpose in some parts of the country. He wanted to know whether the Government could safely and wisely tell them about their organisation for meeting small attacks from the sea and to meet needs which were universally admitted not only in war but just in advance of war. The main point at issue, he thought, which had not been dealt with was how far the Secretary of State had receded from the view which he had put before the House originally, in the first instance as a ground for the reformation of the Volunteers and the creation of an improved form of Territorial Army. It was in order, he understood, to secure the instant mobilisation of a larger and better expeditionary force for sending across the sea than we had ever had before. He had noticed how the right hon. Gentleman's expectations had lessened. His speeches as he had gone on from month to month had less and less spoken of the instant readiness and instant mobilisation in case of war of an expeditionary force, and had decreased the number of the possible forces to be sent across the sea. As regarded the artillery he had now gone back to the old figure. He had spoken of the number of batteries which should be prepared for immediate despatch with a force of the size that he originally named in the House. It would not be in order to discuss the details of the modes chosen for finding horses, for example. But was there this expeditionary force, which was the original ground for the inception of a Territorial Army on a new scale—was there this force in existence, capable of being readily mobilised for despatch across the sea? He agreed that the force was larger than there was any reason naturally to suppose they could possibly afford, given the increasing demand which would be made year by year for the Fleet. Whatever the exeditionary force was, for which they had sacrificed so much, it should be a force ready with the rapidity which the Secretary of State had described to them two years ago. There was a falling off in the right hon. Gentleman's anticipation as regarded the rapidity with which he could mobilise the force, yet after all it was that force for which they paid, and next to the Fleet it was that striking force which cost the most money. That falling off in rapidity was largely a question of these horses, but though the whole case was admitted, they had been told nothing, and there had been a recession in the last few weeks from what had been expected in regard to the possibility of increasing the horse supply. The horses needed had been stated by a representative of the War Office in terms of enormous numbers, almost of exaggeration. There had been a great deal of consideration, but no decision had been come to with regard to the supply. It was so vital to mobilisation that they ought not to pass the Vote until they had had more information in regard to it. He asked again whether they saw an improved result corresponding not with what the country were paying now but what they would have to pay for the Territorial Army when it reached the full numbers expected and was maintained on the scale of efficiency for which they had been prepared by the original speech. Given the maintenance of the Fleet and the need, which they admitted, for an expeditionary force of some sort, ready for rapid mobilisation, and the cost of the horses which that force demanded, could they afford to keep up this Territorial Army on a scale which would be necessary if it was to be an efficient force? It corresponded to no real need and was only a very costly mode of giving that which the Volunteers gave better, —the Volunteer spirit, the Volunteer rapidity of picking up their training, and the courage in the field, which undoubtedly the best Volunteers would always display—at a great cost, under an artificial system not suitable to the training of the men they required.

*MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said the Secretary of State seemed rather to take exception to the statement that he had marked 2,400 of the Field Artillery for destruction. On page 15 of the Army Estimates 2,404 men were put down as excess numbers temporarily retained. There could be no possible doubt that when he got his Special Reserve these 2,400 would be done away with. What they complained of was, not the training of these Special Reservists, which would enable him to mobilise in time of war, but of the substitution of these Special Reservists for more properly trained men. The right hon. Gentleman had told them it was his firm intention to reduce the Regular Army, and to make a better second line to take the place of the Regular soldiers whom he had reduced. He had certainly faithfully reduced the Regular Army by 24,000 men, but as regards the second line the only change was that he had some 100,000 less. In 1905 175,000 Volunteers had excellent training in camp, but probably not more than 70,000 Territorials would have camp training this year. In return for this diminution in strength and efficiency, they had to face the fact that the country was to be asked to spend £500,000 more on the Territorial Force than it spent on the old Volunteer Force. They had in the Territorial Force no more and no less efficiency, but exactly the same force trained under the same conditions, but at present in far less numbers. He agreed that in all probability when everybody realised that there was no change and that no more and no less was asked of anybody, the numbers would rise to what they were in the old Volunteer Force. But that would not give any more efficiency. When the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon quoted from the letter of the Financial Secretary to the War Office, to *The Times*, and stated that no man need go unless he wished, the hon. Gentleman seemed to disagree with that. But in that letter the hon. Gentleman said—

> "There is no hard and fast compulsory attendance at camp for eight or fifteen days; no one will be fined for non-attendance, if there is a good reason."

That meant that nobody came unless he wanted to, because anybody could get a good reason. He complained, when they were asked to pass the Bill last year, that the Government was going to spend £500,000 more, and that they would get no more efficiency. Then the question of horses was an extremely grave and difficult one. In a lecture at the Royal United Service Institution in February, 1908, Colonel Granet, Assistant Director of Remounts, said—

> "I will begin by telling you exactly the number of horses which we require to mobilise not only our expeditionary force—by which I mean all our Regular troops at home—but our Territorial Forces. The total number required to bring all units up to the war establishment is 173,770. Of these, 59,000 are riding horses. The majority, therefore, are cavalry horses. We believe that we should want a reserve at once of about 10 per cent. to meet casualties, such as accidents in trains, deaths on board ship, and so on. Assuming now that the wastage in the war will be such that every unit will require to be completely re-horsed every six months—I may add that that is considerably less than our experience in the South African War, which we take as abnormal for obvious reasons—but assuming that every unit requires re-horsing at the end of six months, at the end of the year of such a war we should have taken from the available stock in the United Kingdom 332,000 horses, of which 180 000 would be riding horses. Now we come to our resources. It is extremely difficult for us to arrive at anything like an accurate estimate of what our military horse population is, if I may use that term; but, by dint of a great deal of assistance from the Board of Agriculture, from chief constables, from masters of hounds, and so on, and a great deal of hard work by our remount staff officers in the districts, we have arrived at an approximate estimate of 1,250,000, and of these only about 150,000 are riding horses. Therefore, at the end of the year we should require 180,000 riding horses, whereas there are only 150,000 in the country. During the South African War we had a great advantage in that the whole horse population of the world was open to us. It is extremely doubtful whether we should enjoy any such advantage in a future war."

Therefore they would require 180,000 riding horses, and as a matter of fact there were only 150,000 horses available in the United Kingdom. That was a very grave and serious state of things, for it showed a deficiency of 30,000 horses, and they could not hope to use the whole of the civilian horses, because some of them must be left in use. Therefore, the difficulty which now confronted the Territorial Force was a very real one, because, as Lord Harris had pointed out, the War Office had very properly given instructions to the County Associations not to make arrangements for earmarking the horses for the Territorial Force until the needs of the Regular Forces had been met. Considering this grave deficiency in the number of horses, what chance was there of the Territorial Force, the Yeomanry, or the Artillery being properly horsed in time of war or sudden invasion? The chance was a very remote one, and was almost impossible of accomplishment. He saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his place, and he would like to ask him to do all he could to meet the desire of the Secretary of State for War and Lord Carrington, the President of the Board of Agriculture, and establish some national system to increase the supply of horses for war purposes, both for the striking force and the Territorial Force. [AN HON. MEMBER: Welsh ponies.] This was a very urgent matter, and one which had to be faced by continental nations some time ago, and would have to be faced by this country, or else we should find ourselves in great difficulties in time of war. Another matter he desired to allude to was the separation allowance which was refused to the private soldier. One shilling per day was given to non-commissioned officers and 2d. for each child, but they had refused to give any money to the married private. He thought that was a most unfortunate decision. It was a pity, because it practically ruled out of the Territorial Force all married men who did not happen to be in comfortable circumstances or in receipt of good wages. Married men as a rule were just as anxious as bachelors to defend their country. Upon higher grounds he thought it was a great mistake, because by cutting out the greater portion of married men they must, at the same time, cut out a great number of those who had the longest service. The men with two, three, or four years service were mostly bachelors, and after that became married men, and by not giving a separation allowance, they cut out the men who had been best trained and who furnished a great deal of the supply of non-commissioned officers. They would make this difficulty much more serious if they insisted, as they should, upon their coming into camp, for that would cut out the men who really ought to be the backbone of the Force. With regard to the pay of the permanent staff, he hoped that might be satisfactorily arranged. Undoubtedly two months ago there was great dissatisfaction in the permanent staff of the Territorial Force owing to the order issued from the War Office stating that not more than £6 10s. should be paid per company for Army emoluments. The Secretary for War had stated that where Associations proposed a scale in excess of £6 10s., and it was justified by circumstances, it would be approved. That might mean much or little. If it meant that where the War Office had approved of an excess over £6 10s. in the case of the old Volunteer service they were prepared to do it again in the future, he would not ask for anything more; but if it meant that they were going to consider the whole thing *de novo*, there might be not only great injustice done to the individuals who composed the permanent staff, but also a great damage to recruiting, because they could not expect men who had their pay put down 50 per cent. to be as energetic as if they had left them in their old position.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond), said the hon. Member must be referring to the extra allowances and not to pay.

*MR. ASHLEY said that was so. Then he understood from friends of his who were in the Yeomanry, that up to now it had been possible for a man when he had done four years service to take on again from year to year. Now he understood that any man whose four years ended this year was to be obliged either to leave the Yeomanry altogether or to take on for another four years.

MR. ACLAND dissented.

*MR. ASHLEY said the hon. Member shook his head, but an officer commanding a Yeomanry regiment who was a Member of this House had informed him that what he had stated was correct. The remaining point he wished to discuss was one which to him was far and away the most important in connection with the Territorial Force, and that was the question of the artillery. They had heard a good deal about that subject to-night, and he thought as it was an experiment on such a gigantic scale that it was impossible to have too much discussion upon it. What was proposed to be done? The Secretary of State for War proposed to raise 182 Territorial batteries amounting to 728 guns. That was an enormous force of artillery to attempt to raise on a Volunteer basis. It might, of course, be said that a person like himself who had never been an artillery officer had no right to express an opinion upon such a technical subject, but every day of one's life one had to form judgment upon matters in regard to which one had no special knowledge and only had the advice of experts to guide one. If an hon. Member wanted to buy a motor-car, and he did not know good machinery from bad, he called in an expert, and in regard to this question of Territorial artillery, they must be entirely guided by the experts. What experts had they on the two sides? Lord Roberts had condemned the scheme root and branch, and he was no doubt the greatest living British general. Lord Roberts had been an artillery officer himself, and he gave it as his opinion that although in certain localities these batteries might be usefully raised, yet this experiment was absolutely unjustifiable and they could not possibly usefully raise 182 batteries all over the United Kingdom. Lord Roberts pointed out with an irresistible force another difficulty when he asked where they were going to get the ranges. At the present time there were only four land artillery ranges in the United Kingdom. Where could they establish ranges eight miles long and two miles wide? Another point was where they were going to get the money for them? Lord Grenfell, the Earl of Denbigh, Lord Midleton, Lord Lansdowne, Sir George Marshall, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon had also condemned the scheme, and if they could not take the advice of an ex-Commander-in-Chief, a general who commanded the Artillery in South Africa, the officer commanding the corps on which this experiment was based, and three ex-Secretaries of State for War, whose advice could they take? Then there was the opinion of the very able officer who acted as the Military Correspondent to *The Times*. What did he think of this experiment? Writing in *The Times* on 21st August, 1906, Colonel Repington said—

> "If any politician believes he is going to obtain officers fit to command modern quick-firing batteries from among people who do not give up their whole time to the study and practice of the science of artillery, the first battle in which these persons are engaged will disabuse him of his belief. Half-trained officers and half-trained men have no business to touch these guns. They will not get half the results obtained by the trained hands; they will get no useful results at all. Better far to arm them with ancient smoothbores, and the simple contrivances of museum artillery, for then, at least, their efforts would not be wholly wasted."

He did not wish to make himself responsible for the opinions of Colonel Repington, but as he had been quoted, he was a man whose opinion they had to consider. If he wrote in *The Times* such a condemnation of half-trained officers and men, that was a matter which ought to receive serious attention. It was well known that in 1905, just before the late Government went out of office, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon appointed a Departmental Committee to consider the whole subject. That Committee, consisting of three eminent officers, reported diametrically in opposition to this plan of the right hon. Gentleman to raise 182 Territorial batteries. The officers forming the Committee were General McKinnon, now commanding the Territorial Force, Sir Frederick Stopford, now commanding the London District, and Sir Neville Lyttelton, then Chief of the General Staff, and now commanding in Ireland. They were absolutely agreed that an experiment on the scale which the right hon. Gentleman was making was absolutely impossible. When a debate took place on this subject on 19th March last, the Secretary of State for War read a letter from Sir John French, the Inspector-General of the Forces, and he would endeavour in a humble way to answer that letter. That gallant general, it should be remembered, was not an artillery but a cavalry officer. He said —

> "The same work as Territorials will perform raised the batteries of the Honourable Artillery Company and Lancashire to a staff of efficiency which is universally acknowledged by experts."

With all deference, he thought that Lord Denbigh who had commanded the Artillery Company for a number of years was a person to whom they ought to pay more attention than to General French. Lord Denbigh said that with all their advantages the Honourable Artillery Company would not equal the best artillery, and he pointed out that no Territorial soldier could hope to have the training or the advantages of the Honourable Artillery Company. As far as the Militia artillery were concerned, they had striking evidence as to their efficiency from Lord Roberts—who, speaking some months ago in the House of Lords, said that when he was Commander-in-Chief, the Lancashire Militia Artillery trained on Salisbury Plain, that the men got more training than the Territorial Force would get, that there was a larger percentage of Regular officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and yet it was reported to him that they could not hope to cope successfully with the batteries of a foreign Power. He did not think General French was very apt in the two instances which he chose to support this proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. In reading the letter he thought one could realise that General French was doing the best he could for a friend, but that really in his heart he did not think the experiment was quite so justifiable as the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think. Sir John French further stated in the letter referred to that in the American Civil War, batteries of field artillery did excellent service with just as little, and in many cases, less previous training than the Territorial Force would receive. He was astonished that so distinguished a general should have cited this war in support of the proposal. It was not to the point, because in the American Civil War they were Volunteers against Volunteers. No experience could possibly be gained or deductions drawn from the fight between the Federals and the Confederates. The North, as appeared from the life of Stonewall Jackson had a certain number of Regular batteries on their side, and they almost invariably swept the Volunteer batteries of the Confederates off the face of the battlefield. It was not until the war had gone on for a year or two that the Confederates were able to hold their own against the Northern batteries. That illustration brought forward by the gallant general was not very happy, and indeed strengthened the case of the critics. [AN HON. MEMBER: What about the Boer War?] He was going to mention that. In the Boer War exactly the same thing happened. He paid a visit to the Transvaal the year before the war broke out and had an opportunity of seeing the state of efficiency which the Transvaal Artillery had reached. Though they had reached a certain state of efficiency, they had not reached anything like the efficiency of the Regular batteries in this country or in any foreign country. The Transvaal Artillery were no more efficient than the Elswick Battery which went out from this country. Therefore, no lesson in that respect could be drawn from the South African War. In his letter Sir John French also said—

> "Of course, all soldiers would prefer the highest trained artillery they could get, but the country insists on economy, and I assume no Regular Artillery is available."

That was the whole point. The country did insist on economy. He and his friends did not wish the right hon. Gentleman to go into this gigantic experiment which, if a failure, would have cost the country nearly £500,000 a year, and Regular artillery was available. If the right hon. Gentleman would go slowly and raise batteries in twenty selected localities he would save the country the great risk of losing a large part of this money, and he would carry out the policy which was advised by all the experts and was initiated by his predecessors. In 1901 twenty-one batteries were sanctioned in selected localities, and in 1905 arrangements were made to provide two brigades of Volunteers to train with quick-firing guns. The 182 Territorial batteries—

apart from capital account—would cost £2,400 a year each, making the annual expenditure £437,000. The right hon. Gentleman had decreased the establishment of thirty-three Regular batteries to training strength, and though he had thereby saved £149,000 a year, had made them useless for war. Let him raise twenty Territorial batteries in selected localities, which would cost £48,000 a year, restore the thirty-three batteries to their original establishment at a cost of £149,000, and in that way save £240,000 a year, which might be very usefully employed in strengthening the Regular Forces as a whole.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.) said that as these debates proceeded the same arguments were used over and over again. The main point of interest was to see how the full force of these arguments and the progress of time might have told one way or another, because there was not one in the House who entirely condemned the Territorial scheme, and on the other hand it was said that there was no one who approved of it in all its details, if he excepted the members of the Government. The arguments used in these lengthy discussions led one to take further advice—he would not say from experts, but from foreigners who had practical experience. Having done that, one got more and more in favour of the main features of the scheme. He confessed that he now regarded the Territorial Artillery with more favour than when he first spoke in the House on the subject. Taking the whole scheme, first of all, he would say that many critics of it outside the House did not appreciate what the alternatives were. Some people, speaking lightly, said "Well, we must have conscription." Did they realise what conscription was? There was only one country where universal conscription existed, and that was France. France was a military nation, it had a long military tradition, and the people were eminently apt to respond to a call to arms, but the friction produced in that country under universal conscription was almost intolerable. In Germany they got out of it by enforcing it only on poor men. That was a form to which the English temperament would not submit. We had institutions which would prevent a discrimination of that sort, and even if it were applied in that modified form without the spur of immediate danger we should have instead of a voluntary force something quite as inefficient, probably enormously too large, and probably not more than half-trained. But under our present conditions to enforce the grinding misery of a system of conscription would be impossible. Then there was another plan. We could have a large professional Army to guard our shores and prevent raid or invasion. If so, the country must pay for it. He held the conviction—a layman's, not an expert's conviction—that something of that kind we must have. One critic from the Front Opposition Bench said that we were practically in the same position as before, except that we had not so many men. To that he answered that, so far as he could judge, we had got the unit. That was a new and important thing; and things that were made were much better than things that happened. Almost everything that could be said had been said about the Territorial Artillery. It was urged that it had been condemned by so many professional soldiers. He could easily understand that. The gunners were the darlings of the Army, and that branch of the English Army had always been notably efficient. When, therefore, it was proposed to establish Territorial field batteries, he could understand that professional soldiers, thinking only of the repute of that arm, would condemn the proposal. But there was something else—an argument which had been already used by himself. It was a tradition of the English people and of the old Volunteer Force, to have one homogeneous body animated with the same sort of sentiment, composed of the same sort of people, living the same sort of life. Therefore, they thought that the whole organisation of such a body should be of one kind. There was considerable force in that argument. He would take a concrete detail. When guns were shooting in support of infantry, that infantry would fight better if they knew that the gunners belonged to the same body of the nation as they did and not to the professional Army. The same argument applied if infantry were supporting the gunners. Both arms should belong to the one force. That they should belong to one force would be a very powerful psychological factor indeed. He knew that in every other Territorial Force the artillery were more or less professional. Certainly it was true of France and Switzerland. He was still of opinion that the amount of training given to gunners and drivers under this scheme was insufficient, but it was from the amateur and not the professional standpoint that the scheme must stand or fall. They could not mix the two. If ever in the case of the outbreak of a war an expeditionary force was being heavily used, the temptation to send with it battery after battery of professional gunners was so enormous that he did not think the Government of the day could stand out against it. And then, supposing there was an invasion, a thing that might happen, what could the Territorial Force do? The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, pre-supposed a raid upon our ports. Personally, he thought that the raid, if it took place, was very much more likely to be made at one of our Naval bases. An invasion, they were all agreed, in our present circumstances, this Territorial Force could not meet, if we had lost command of the sea. But apart from that, could this force do anything against a raid? Most certainly it could. The hon. and gallant Member for Widnes suggested a raid, but he did not define what was a raid. His definition of a raid was that it was possible when we did not care very much about our communications. In a full campaign the preservation of our communications would be essential. But if an enemy made a raid he would not come oversea from the Continent with a very large proportion of artillery, because of the difficulty of carrying it on board ship along with enough ammunition for the supply of the guns, and because the invaders would have to land in a difficult position. Anyone who had expert and historic knowledge of campaigns in the past was aware that what provoked fear on the part of the people in the country to be invaded was the dread of great numbers more than of a small highly-organised expedition. Raids, in fact, had generally been made in countries where there was not a very large civilian population. Therefore, he was more and more convinced that unless we paid more for it than the country was prepared to do, the artillery of the Territorial Force should be amateur rather than professional, and that with more training it would be quite equal to the purpose for which the Territorial Force was constituted.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover) said he wished to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War on the three Territorial batteries which were at Salisbury Plain. One of these was the battery of the Honourable Artillery Company, which was always good and was commanded by Lord Denbigh, a Member of the other House and a well-known Regular officer and an expert in artillery. The noble Lord had with him as adjutant an excellent Regular officer, and that would account for a great deal of its superiority. He congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on having given way in granting to the battery a quartermaster from the Regular Army. He would suggest that there should be Regular adjutants for all the batteries, and if the right hon. Gentleman said that there was not money enough, he might reduce the number of batteries to correspond with the money he had to expend. In that way the Territorial scheme would be rendered more efficient. No scheme was good which was inefficient, and what was wanted by every Member was the best return for money spent on the Army. As regarded the shooting of the Territorial batteries, he thought that the weak spot was that the positions were not changed, by which he meant that each battery formed should have guns in position ready for it. If we were at war with a Continental Power that would not be the case; the batteries would be obliged to move and take up fresh positions. The batteries should be exercised for a longer period of time so that they could move rapidly. He was told that in all the plans for continental armies invading this country only a very few batteries were down for embarkation, on account of the want of room on shipboard, and because of the difficulty of manœuvering artillery in our narrow lanes. It was not very likely than an invading force would come to Salisbury Plain, but it would probably disembark somewhere on the East Coast where lanes existed. It was, therefore, urgent that our Territorial Artillery should be well taught, as it was much more difficult to shoot over advancing or retiring friendly troops in narrow lanes than on a plain. It was evident that only defensive positions could be chosen for our Territorial Artillery in nearly every part of England. Good shooting was simply a matter of practice, and he hoped that that would be encouraged. He believed that the Bristol corps had already done more training than was necessary for the whole year—riding from seven to eight in the morning and from seven to eight in the evening. As to the question of horses, the hon. Member for Widnes had told him the previous night that he had absolutely no horses for his batteries. If that were so the case was grave. An hon. Member opposite had asked him if he was going to Ascot on Wednesday to see the races and he tempted him to go with him. While there he was reminded of a story of an owner who asked his jockey why he did not come along and win the race, when the jockey answered: "I cannot come without the horse." He hoped when the day of trial came the same reply would not be given to the Secretary of State for War by the Territorial Artillery.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) said that the Motion he had on the Paper concerned a very important matter in connection with a corps which would be necessary for the defence of Scotland, if, as the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had suggested, a raid was possible in that part of the country—he meant the Stirlingshire battalion of the Territorial Force. Stirlingshire lay on the neck of Scotland connecting by a canal the Firth of Forth and the Firth of Clyde and would, as indicated by the right hon. Baronet, be exposed to the full force of such a raid from the direction of the Firth of Forth; and if the proposed strategic canal for warships were built through the county Stirlingshire, would have to bear the brunt of any attack on the Scottish coast. Therefore if there was one corps more than another which deserved to be encouraged it was the Stirlingshire battalion. What he had to complain of was that very great discouragement had been given to that corps by what he ventured to call a "job." The battalion in 1907 consisted of forty-five officers and 1,200 men. With the new Territorial scheme of 1907 came a Memorandum in November explaining the principle upon which the scheme was based, and one of the primary conditions was that the number of troops allocated to each county should be in proportion to the population of the county. Delegates were sent and questions connected with the allocation of the Territorial Force were then discussed. The next communication received by the County Association was on 8th February, 1908, announcing that as a result of the discussions at that conference the Stirlingshire battalion was to be reduced by half. That was to say, there were to be four companies of sixteen officers and 512 men, less than half of the allocation made in the original scheme sent in 1907. Previous to the letter of 8th February no intimation was given, no reason was given for this momentous change, and the change was made and announced without the County Association having been once Consulted in the matter. They were told that the change had been made, and that they must submit to this reduction. The cause of this change was that Clackmannanshire after squaring the Scottish Command, had sent a deputation comprising the lord lieutenant of the county and some Members of Parliament to interview the War Office, and by the use of backstairs influence to induce the War Office to make this reduction in Stirlingshire in order to permit of the full strength of Clackmannanshire being maintained. The reduction was made by or at the instance of the Scottish Command, by which (he understood) was meant the General Officer in Command in Scotland and his staff, and that was the reason he moved to reduce the salaries of these gentlemen by £1,000. He did so in order to make his protest, and with the hope of persuading the House to protect the Stirlingshire force against such humiliating and unjustifiable treatment. If the battalion was reduced by 50 per cent.

where was the encouragement for the people of Stirlingshire to enlist in the Territorial Army? He was told that a special deputation from Clackmannanshire had come to the War Office, after squaring the Scottish Command, and by the use of this backstairs influence persuaded——

Mr. HALDANE: A deputation did come to me, not from Clackmannan but from Stirling.

*Mr. SMEATON: Yes; to protest against the very change that I have alluded to.

Mr. HALDANE: The supposed change.

Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said there was a good deal being said about backstairs influence. He represented Clackmannan, and he certainly was not one of those who were supposed to have used this influence.

*Mr. SMEATON said that what was quite certain was that undue influence had been used, behind the back of the Stirling County Association, and that when the War Office and the Scottish Command were pressed for their reasons for the reduction in Stirlingshire, they said that it was necessary on strategic grounds. What those strategic grounds could possibly be, and how they could apply to Stirling and to no other county but Stirling, he could not understand. The only strategy which he could discover was the strategy of climbing up the backstairs. The chief injustice lay in the fact that it was done without notice to the county which had maintained for years a large and thoroughly efficient battalion in an important—and from a military point of view very important—part of Scotland. That battalion had been denuded of half its strength, and its patriotism had been discouraged by the act of somebody without consulting the County Association. As he had already pointed out the primary principle on which the original allocation was made was the principle of population. Stirling had five times the population of Clackmannan, yet in spite of that the change had been made with the result that the military strength of Clackmannan and Stirling were the same. Whoever was to blame for this extraordinary transaction he considered it was a scandalous piece of jobbery, and he hoped if the right hon. Gentleman was unable to support the action of the War Office and the Chief Command of Scotland in this matter the Committee would support him in declaring that this action should be disapproved.

Mr. EUGENE WASON said he had not intended to interrupt his hon. friend, but when the insinuation was made that he used backstairs influence he could only rise and deny it. He did not know anything about the matter. All he knew was that a proposal was made to change the head-quarters, and they made representations to the right hon. Gentleman and the Chief Command of Scotland that the head quarters should be in Stirlingshire. That was all he knew about it.

Mr. ACLAND expressed the opinion that it would be better, before dealing with the general subject matter of this debate, if he referred to the question that had just been raised. In regard to the allocation of units in all commands of both the Highland and Lowland divisions of Scotland, in the Highlands there were thirty-four battalions in existence; the proper complement was twelve battalions. As a special concession it was decided to maintain in Scotland several extra battalions as Army Reserves. In the first allocation of troops, Stirlingshire was to have one battalion, but it was made quite clear that that was only provisional, and that before the matter was formally settled there must be full consideration with the general consent of the General Staff. Considering that the Highland County Associations had to reduce the number of battalions from thirty-four to seventeen —five battalions were left as a Reserve— there was bound to be hardship somewhere. It was no more owing to backstairs influence that half a battalion had been taken off in Stirlingshire than it was that whole battalions had been taken off in other places. It was not stating the whole case to say they had lost half a battalion, because, although that was true, yet the War Office had done their best to give Stirlingshire a chance of showing the great patriotism of its large population by asking them to endeavour to raise half a battalion of cyclists as a unit of the Army Service Corps. Therefore, the total allocated to Stirlingshire now was nearly the same as the total number raised by the county of Stirling before. It was, of course, quite possible if they found that units which had been allotted to different counties could not be raised by those counties by 30th June they would be able to offer Stirling additional units to those which had been already allotted to the county. That was perhaps a fuller explanation than the Committee desired in this matter, but it showed that no great injustice had been done to Stirling, because there had been a general reduction of units all over the country.

*MR. SMEATON asked what were the strategic grounds on which the reduction was made.

MR. ACLAND said it was the point raised by the hon. Baronet with regard to raids. It was very necessary to have great regard to the question of getting these Army troop battalions near the coast. Stirling was not, as he understood, a maritime county. He knew very little about Stirling, but he understood it was not a maritime county.

*MR. SMEATON said Stirlingshire was the connecting link, by means of a canal, between the East and West of Scotland and was therefore of great strategic importance.

MR. ACLAND said there was a canal there now, but at present there was none which would carry war ships between the Forth and the Clyde; therefore he thought that the allocation of a few armed troops was the best that could be done at the present time. He had intended to refer to one or two points mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon, but as he was not in his place he would only say, as a young recruit speaking of a veteran, how very pleased they had all been to see him back once more, and to hear him make such a very fine speech as he had made that afternoon. Both the right hon. Gentleman and other speakers had referred at very considerable length to the subject of the Field Artillery of the Territorial Force. It was, perhaps, worth while to say that in this matter of the suitability of the artillery to the Territorial Force history seemed to be repeating itself. A month or two ago he had read some criticisms which were made when it was proposed that the Volunteers should undertake the service of Garrison Artillery, and exactly the same thing was said in criticism then as was now being said in criticism of the proposal that they should undertake Field Artillery. He believed that it had been entirely admitted that those criticisms had not been justified in the case of the Garrison Artillery; therefore, they must hope that the same admission would come to be made a few years hence when this experiment had had a real opportunity of being properly tried. He thought he ought to say something in defence of his colleague on the Army Council, Lord Lucas, whose brilliant paper had been criticised by those who had not heard it read. He had heard it, and he thought that if others had heard it the impression conveyed to them would have been rather different. Lord Lucas did not say that he would guarantee to train a battery of Field Artillery in a week; he was only reminding his audience of what good material already existed in different parts of the country for carrying out the functions of the Field Artillery, and he said—

> "If I could take my pick from the best drivers of Pickford's vans, and of the class which are now forming our Yeomanry, together with the pick of the skilled men in Armstrong's works, then I might train a battery in a week almost."

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I listened to the paper, and there was no "almost" about it.

MR. ACLAND said it might be that he was wrong in that, but he thought that the description which he gave, of course from memory, conveyed a rather different impression from that which was given by the speeches earlier in the afternoon. It was not the statement of Lord Lucas that he could train a battery of Field Artillery in a week. He now came to the very serious and interesting statements of the hon. Member for Blackpool. The hon. Member asked whether the right hon. Gentleman had a more efficient second line Army in this new force. Of course, no one had yet substituted a more efficient force for the old force. The new conditions had only been in operation for two months. They must wait until after the training next year, or it might be the year after that, in order that they might be able finally to answer, as the hon. Member seemed to expect that they were now able to answer, the question as to whether these new conditions really made anything like a revoluntionary change.

Mr. ASHLEY was understood to ask whether the Goverment had made more onerous and strict conditions as to camp duty than in the case of the Volunteers.

Mr. ACLAND: Certainly; that had been brought out in the debates last year, before the Bill was passed, and had been discussed since. Night after night they had been bombarded with questions from the other side, and asked to leave the whole thing in the hands of the commanding officer as it used to be, though with the result that men could get off camp duty in some battalions with practically any excuse at all, while in other battalions it was impossible to get off. That was a thing of the past. They had refused to leave it in the hands of the commanding officer, but, if it had to be done by the commanding officer, it would be subject to regulations laid down by the general officer commanding the district. Another matter which the hon. Member had dealt with was as to horses. That was no doubt a very serious matter indeed. The hon. Member was quite right in saying two things—first of all, that the question was being very seriously considered, and, secondly that time must, be allowed for the consideration of a big scheme for encouraging the breeding of the horses that they required. Of course, that might become a very expensive thing, and it must take time for such schemes to be discussed and considered. He did not think that the remark that had been made earlier was accurate, namely, that it was not deficiency of horses, but that the money was insufficient for the hire of horses. He did not think that criticism would really hold water. He believed that the deficiency was much more in the horses than in the money to provide the horses. The noble Lord said that the Association had not sufficient money. How could he possibly tell? They had not got through anything like half the year, and how could he tell that the associations would find that their grants were utterly insufficient?

Earl WINTERTON said he was informed that the preliminary bills for hire of horses the Yeomanry had been paid out of the pockets of the officers because the Associations had no money.

Mr. ACLAND said he could not explain that. The amount of money given was very great. He had the figures of the amount paid for the hire of horses in the different batteries of Artillery. He found —outside the camp, of course; camp was a different thing and was not included— that the Field Artillery Brigade had allotted to it 465; the Horse Artillery battery and ammunition column, 205; and the Howitzer battery, 265. The figures in regard to the hire of horses for drills etc., excluding training, he had not with him, but no doubt the horses were hired for preliminary drills. He failed to see how it could be found out at the very beginning of the year that the Associations had no money to devote to these purposes. His right hon. friend said the total sum devoted to horse hire, excluding camps, both for Artillery and Yeomanry was £50,000 a year. They had not heard from the Associations that this money was insufficient, and without a good deal more examination and experience they would not be able to judge whether the money was sufficient or insufficient. The very important question of separation allowance for married soldiers had been raised, and he would give some figures which he had caused to be worked out with regard to the pay which the men would get in camp under the new conditions. He took the case of the infantry; they knew the case of the Yeomanry well enough. He had caused three brigades to be taken at random, and the amount of pay actually given under the old conditions to be ascertained. The average rates of pay made to Volunteers during camp from corps funds, over three brigades, or twelve corps, gave for sergeants, 1s. 7¾d.; corporals, 1s. 4⅔d.; privates, 1s. 1¼d. Under the new conditions these figures compared with 2s. 4d. to sergeants and 1s. 5d. separation allowance; corporals, 1s. 8d. and 1s. 5d. separation allowance; and privates, 1s. instead of 1s. 1¼d., which was not a very great reduction. The average cost per head per man under the new system would be 1s. 2⅜d., while under the old conditions in these three brigades it was 1s. 1·72d., so that there was a distinct improvement on the average under the new conditions. With regard to the separation allowance, they were asked to spend money in a great many directions, and they had received proposals which, if added together, would mean an additional cost of £178,000 a year for the Territorial Force. So far as he could see, he did not think that the proposal to spend £50,000 extra on separation allowance for married privates would be as justifiable as many other proposals which had been put before them. Those who worked hard would quickly become non-commissioned officers, and it was right to hold out that rank as a thing which carried special recognition from the point of view of separation allowance. They did not want more than a certain proportion of men who would not and could not attain to non-commissioned rank to stay more than a certain number of years, for they believed that they could get their full numbers, or something very near them, and unless the men attained to non-commissioned rank it was generally felt that a large proportion of them, at any rate, should pass out after four or five years, and their places be taken by other men receiving training. Then his hon. friend had referred to the question of the pay of the permanent staff. He would state exactly the emoluments these men received, and would take, for the sake of simplicity, the most usual case, that of the colour-sergeant. First of all, he got 3s. a day pay, 6d. a day efficiency pay, 6d. a day for his rations, 3d. a day medical allowance, 3d. a day clothing allowance, and 2d. a day kit allowance. That was fearful complication, and showed the extraordinary state of the regulations in regard to the pay of the Army. If he was not given free quarters he had 1s. a day in lieu thereof. That totalled up to 5s.8d. a day or 39s.8d. a week from Army funds without any question of special allowances. They must bear in mind also that he could retire at fifty or fifty-two years of age, having, by the way, completed a much longer period of service with the colours than he would have done if he had remained with his Regular unit, on a pension of 14s. to 16s. a week. In addition to £2 a week and the certainty of this employment, and his pension, he was under exactly the same regulations under the Territorial Force as he was in the case of the Volunteers. The regulation had been copied almost verbatim from the old Volunteer regulations as to pay and allowances. They did not prescribe and never had prescribed that the allowance should be only at the rate of £6 10s. per infantry company. It always was, and was now, stated in these words—

> "It is not possible to lay down a universal rate for such payments, but as a general rule the annual payment should not exceed £6 10s. per infantry company."

That regulation was always allowed a good deal of latitude, and that would doubtless still be the case. But when his hon. friend asked him whether they were going to continue the old allowances given in the case of the Volunteers, or use their own judgment as to what each particular case required, he was bound to say they were going to review the matter.

MR. ASHLEY said that all these special things were carefully gone into under War Office authority by general officers commanding districts in 1902 and 1904, and they sanctioned all these extra payments.

MR. ACLAND thought the hon Member would find that that was not so. A great many of these payments had sprung up and were being made without the sanction of the War Office or the general officers commanding. There had been various authorisations of higher rates, and they had been given in many cases without that authorisation. It did not for some years come to the notice of the War Office that in many cases very high and extravagant rates were being paid. Now these facts were clearly before them, and he thought that if the House knew of the amount to which these extra allowances additional to the Army pay had in some cases risen they would see that there was full justification for reviewing the position. There were cases in which a corps had exceeded its allowance to its permanent staff by £250 a year, and where an instructor had had his emoluments exactly doubled, and he had a case of a corps in which the excess payments for five instructors for working only nine companies was over £60 a head. They could not let that sort of thing go on. These positions were very much coveted by non-commissioned officers, and if there was dissatisfaction at any revision which had taken place on the part of those who now held the appointments it would be perfectly easy to supply excellent men to take their place at the shortest notice. The Associations would be able, under the new conditions, to represent to the War Office cases in which they considered that the work done justified extra payments, and wherever they found that this extra work was required in the special circumstances of the case he did not think there would be a want of generosity in meeting special cases. The final point which the hon. Member raised was with regard to the conditions of service in the Yeomanry. He asked what was going to happen when the present yeoman transferring into the Territorial Forces concluded the period of service for which he had originally enlisted. It was true that there was some possibility of misunderstanding in the matter. They had issued a leaflet headed "Service of the Imperial Yeomanry in the Territorial Force," in which the question of re-engagement was not dealt with. A second leaflet which was scattered broadcast over the country under the heading "Re-engagement," applying to the whole Territorial Army, Yeomanry included, said—

"Men will, as now, be allowed to re-engage when their term of original enlistment is completed with the consent of their commanding officer for a term of not less than one year and not more than four years as may be fixed by the County Association."

Mr. WYNDHAM (Dover) said the misconception arose from the fact that this applied to a yeoman who had entered the Territorial Army, and had served his four years. The case which they were anxious to consider was that of men who had concluded the old three years. In some regiments of 400 men there might be 200 going out this year.

Mr. ACLAND said he had no hesitation in saying it was perfectly certain that these men would not be required if they re-enlisted to re-enlist for the full extra period of four years. That did not mean that the men would invariably be allowed to re-enlist only for one year, but he had no reason to believe that the Associations would insist on the longer period.

*Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) called attention to the fact that the whole weight of independent professional opinion was dead against the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the 182 batteries of Volunteer Artillery. When the right hon. Gentleman and those who spoke for him dealt with this point, they answered apparently on one of two grounds. There was first the ground of sentiment, and they objected to the critics on the ground that they wished to impair the establishment of the Territorial Army as a whole. He thought the right hon. Gentleman rather misjudged them. They were not, he thought, unwilling even to see a large advance made in the experiment in regard to Volunteer Artillery. He knew there were extremely efficient batteries, and no doubt they might be largely extended by recruiting in special centres, and he was sure they all wished him well. But surely the right hon. Gentleman was in some difficulty himself in what he said earlier in the evening. He said that when he went into office he found there was a certain number of Volunteer Artillery already existing and he asked, "How could he sweep them away?" He said, "We know how sensitive Volunteers are. The existence of these four units is bound up with local feeling," and yet he said frankly at the same time that this was an experiment. If it was it might fail, and if it failed how would he and his successor be off with regard to this immense number of batteries? If he knew that he could not deal with the very much smaller number that already existed, how would it be possible for him to deal with this enormous aggregate of batteries which by that time would have acquired a footing in their various localities? The right hon. Gentleman said he had the support of his professional advisers, but all Service Ministers had said the same in the past. He might take the classical instance of the Navy Estimates of 1888. At that time Lord Charles Beresford resigned, because he was dissatisfied with the position of the fleet and the shipbuilding programme of the year, and when the question was raised on 12th March, 1888, in the House, the First Lord of the Admiralty said—

> "My hon. and gallant friend says he defies me to state that the Naval Lords agree with me. Well, they do agree with me. Every word of the Memorandum was sent to every member of the Board responsible to my own Department, and it was because they agreed with me that I have laid it on the Table of this House. I must object to its being intimated either by assertion or insinuation that there is any difference of opinion between the First Lord of the Admiralty and the experts on the Board.

The House, however, was not satisfied, and a Select Committee was pressed for, and when it was appointed the members of the Board of Admiralty were examined. Eventually, the Committee produced their Report, in which they said that the approval of the expert advisers of the Minister was only conditional in regard to the amount of money available for the year, and did not represent any real concurrence with the opinion expressed. The assent of the Naval Lords was absolutely conditional, they had formed no view as to the necessities of the Fleet as a whole, and under the existing system it was not possible for them to do so. That was admitted by all the Sea Lords, and especially the First Sea Lord, when the matter was discussed. This was only brought out by the fact that a Select Committee was appointed, and if it had not been appointed the First Lord of the Admiralty would have been able to say throughout that he had the full support of his Naval advisers. The matter was, however, thrashed out, and on the Report of that Committee it was found absolutely and essentially necessary to undertake an entire reversion of policy which was carried out in the following year. Similarly now he asked the Secretary of State for War to consider the weight of professional opinion which was against his proposal on this head, and considering the perplexity the public was in when the right hon. Gentleman stated that his professional advisers endorsed this policy, he asked the right hon. Gentleman to grant a small Select Committee to deal with the state of the Army as it was now. He would like to know further whether the Territorial Army was intended as a fighting unit or not. If it was to be merely the nursing ground of a military spirit, as was suggested by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, then let the House know and let the country realise that it was the Navy and the Navy alone to which they must look for the defence of these shores. If, however, the Territorial Army was meant to fight an enemy, then let them have a little more assurance that the experts were wrong and the right hon. Gentleman was right in pursuing this grandiose plan. The public were getting more and more uneasy, and unless the right hon. Gentleman supplied them with a little more light they would come to look upon him not as a great reformer but as a courteous and genial philosopher endowed with the gift of making the worse appear the better reason.

*MR. McCRAE (Edinburgh, E.) said that most of the criticism which had been directed against his right hon. friend had been rather of a departmental and technical nature. He was going to pay the Secretary of State for War a very bad compliment. The right hon. Gentleman had been able in three months to do what two previous Secretaries of State for War had endeavoured to do, namely, he had reduced the Volunteer Force by half its number. In the case of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon, the reduction he proposed to make, to 180,000 men, was deliberate and intended to be permanent, but the reduction of his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War was accidental, and was going to be only temporary. He thought they ought to congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon for so generously stating that he had no fear whatever that the men would be forthcoming for the scheme of his right hon. friend. They now found themselves with a largely reduced force, and there were three main causes for it. The first cause was the delay in issuing the conditions of service. He was not contending that that delay could have been avoided, but the effect was there, and the net result was that they lost the recruiting season, and when they considered that nearly 50,000 men used to join every year it would be seen that the right hon. Gentleman lost at least 50,000 men by that delay. The second cause for the men not coming forward was the issuing of an attestation paper in the form which had afterwards to be withdrawn. A third reason, which he did not think had been made so apparent to the right hon. Gentleman, was the concession from the 31st March to 30th June for men to change over from the one force to the other. He did not say that the War Office, after the delay in issuing the conditions of service, could have adhered to the 31st March, but that extension of time had had a very unsettling effect upon Volunteers. Having, however, made that concession, he put it to the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not be the right thing even now to extend that concession to the 31st March next year. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that 94,000 men who had joined the new Territorial Force had joined for one year only, and he thought it would be rather a difficult problem for his right hon. friend to face when the time came—and he was speaking with some knowledge of what was in the mind of many of the men who had joined for one year—for them to sign on for three years. He pressed the Secretary for War to consider the desirability of leaving the matter open for this year so that the Volunteer who had not really given up his opportunity might, during the course of this year, with the assistance of the camp training, make himself efficient after 30th June. A good many men had been scared by the unfounded dread that the new conditions of the Volunteers were to be very onerous. The Secretary for War could remedy all this in a great measure by giving the concession he had asked for. The Government had had to contend against two difficulties. In the first place, the men were alarmed as to the conditions of service; but another obstacle was mentioned by the hon. and gallant Member for Fareham. Those who were in favour of compulsory service had been doing all they could to make voluntary service impossible. What did the hon. and gallant Member for Fareham himself say? He said that the only way that the scheme could be galvanised into life was by largely increased expenditure or by some form of compulsory service. That was one of the difficulties placed in the way of the success of the Territorial scheme, because those who were in favour of compulsory service had been doing all they could to damage the scheme in the eyes of the citizens, and they had tried to make the conditions appear much more onerous than they really were. The hon. and gallant Member for Fareham had referred to the Military Correspondent of *The Times* as the Man Friday of the Secretary of State for War. He disowned that reflection upon his right hon. friend, because if there was any point in it it was that his right hon. friend was Robinson Crusoe cast away on a desert island. He hoped the Secretary for War would not be discouraged by those difficulties, because it would take time to restore confidence which had been shattered. He believed that the scheme of the Government was founded upon right lines, and he dissented from the view expressed by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean that they ought not to provide a force for defence. Even supposing the right hon. Baronet's view was the right one, that the Territorial Force should be for the training of men, and not of units, surely he would agree that the training of men in brigades and divisions would make them still more capable of what he considered its proper function, viz., supplying the wastage of war. The scheme provided a self-contained Army for defensive purposes, with its own cavalry and artillery. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon had said that the Volunteers contained the best possible material. He had no doubt that, in a very short time, the men who came into the artillery could be trained very efficiently. But that was a pure matter of speculation. His right hon. friend was going to make the attempt. The time to consider whether it was necessary to stiffen the Territorial artillery by Regular artillery men was when, if ever, they found that the scheme for providing a Territorial Army with its own artillery had broken down. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Croydon made a statement in which he overstated his case. The right hon. Gentleman said that the War Office had departed from the conditions of service laid down in the Act of Parliament. He entirely dissented from that statement. The right hon. Gentleman said the conditions as to service in camp were gone. Nothing of the kind. The Act of Parliament laid down certain conditions, and they had been strictly adhered to in every particular. In regard to penalties, he would say that they were as onerous in most regiments under the old system as they were now. As to camp, the General Officer commanding a division was to have a certain discretion as to the exemption of units and the officers commanding battalions as to the exemption of individual men. That was all provided for in the Act. He thought it would be a pity if it went forth that the Army Council were relaxing the conditions laid down in the Act of Parliament. They might congratulate themselves on having made a good beginning. Although they had only 150,000 men, it was a very good, and indeed a surprising start, all things considered, to make in a period of three months. He hoped the Secretary of State for War would consider the advisability of giving those serving in the Volunteer Force the whole of this year in which to enrol themselves in the new organisation, and that he would see that on the Army Council there should be direct representation of the new force. It was only by doing so that he would get into touch with the force itself. Speaking from experience, he thought the County Associations were working very well, but they would only continue to work well by delegating a good deal of power to the officers commanding battalions. The more power they delegated to the commanding officers, the better type of men they would get, and the more satisfactory would be the results.

*VISCOUNT VALENTIA (Oxford) called attention to the pay and allowances of the permanent staff of both cavalry and infantry. The ultimate success of the new scheme must depend in a large measure on the work of the permanent staff; therefore, if they had any grievances in the way of pay they should be looked into. He maintained that at present they were underpaid. In the cavalry the regimental sergeant-major's pay was reduced from 9s. 6d. per day to 6s. 8½d, that of the squadron sergeant-major was reduced from 8s. 10d. to 6s. 8½d; and their lodging allowance of £18 5s. per annum was stopped if they lived at the squadron store, the rent of which was paid by the Association. In the infantry the colour-sergeant on transfer from a Regular regiment as instructor to the Territorial Infantry lost £20 per annum. In the Yeomanry, officers were allowed for only one horse instead of the commanding officer's three, and other officers' two under the old *regime*. The travelling allowance had been largely reduced for both officers and men, musketry pay had been stopped, and for squadron drills no pay was allowed to either. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would look into these and other small points with relation to pay and allowances with the view to removing the dissatisfaction which was at present felt. If the payments were made on a more liberal scale, men would be far more likely to enlist for a period of four years than they were under existing conditions.

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under

Standing Order No. 8, further Proceeding was postponed without Question put.

TYNE IMPROVEMENT BILL (BY ORDER).

As amended, considered.

*MR. HERBERT CRAIG (Tynemouth) said that in moving the first of the Amendments which stood in his name he wished to put the House in possession of the facts which had led to an unfortunate *impasse* between two public bodies on the River Tyne. These bodies had come to loggerheads and had spent £20,000 of public money in pursuing litigation and in fruitless Parliamentary expenses. He maintained that that wasteful expenditure could have been in part if not entirely avoided if the corporation of the town which he had the honour to represent had been treated with any consideration. The matter in dispute was one that any two responsible persons or private corporations would have found a means of settling in the course of half-an-hour's conversation. The River Tyne Commissioners, who were the promoters of the Bill under consideration, were the Conservancy Body of the River Tyne. At the mouth of the river, the Tynemouth Corporation owned a fish quay in North Shields from which that corporation derived a considerable portion of its revenue. The Tyne Commissioners in the course of their duty had been dredging the River Tyne. The Tynemouth Corporation did not wish to stand in the way of any necessary dredging of that river, of which all Northumberland people were proud. The result of the deeper dredging rendered necessary by the increased depth of modern tonnage, had increased the range of the sea which was allowed to enter the river whenever the weather was rough outside. That rendered the berthage at the fish quay less secure than formerly. A great development had taken place in the kind of vessels employed in the fishing industry, and when an expensive trawler came to the quay she was liable, in certain states of the weather, to be knocked about and damaged. Insurance companies therefore had put up their rates, and these vessels were going to other ports, causing thereby a loss of revenue to the Borough of Tynemouth. It so happened that the Tyne Commissioners had exceeded their statutory powers in dredging so deeply, while at the same time they offered no protection to the Tynemouth Corporation against the injury they were causing. The Tynemouth Corporation therefore went to the Court of Chancery, and after a long hearing, obtained from Mr. Justice Warrington an injunction against the Tyne Commissioners continuing their deep dredging. Mr. Justice Warrington also granted an inquiry to be made as to the amount of damages to be given. As showing that the position of the Tynemouth Corporation was entirely reasonable he might state that it was counsel for Tynemouth, who made the application to Mr. Justice Warrington asking for the postponement of the operation of the injunction for the purpose of enabling the Tyne Commissioners to promote a Bill in Parliament to legalise their position and to obtain further dredging powers. It was assumed that in coming to Parliament the Tyne Commissioners would insert in their Bill some clause designed to protect the Corporation from the damage which Mr. Justice Warrington had found, as a fact, was caused by their illegal dredging, and which damage would become greater if further dredging was carried on. Yet, when the Tyne Commissioners produced their Bill there was not a single clause designed to afford the Corporation whatever reasonable measure of protection engineering science could afford. The Committee upstairs after hearing evidence and the judgment of the Court of Chancery, naturally came to the conclusion that the Tynemouth Corporation were entitled to some special clause giving that protection. Accordingly they inserted in the Bill what was now Clause 4. It was only an Amendment to that clause which he now asked the House to assent to, because as the clause now stood it provided no machinery for enabling the corporation to invoke the protection which it purported to afford. Who was to say when the occasion had arisen or what was to be the character of the works or the degree of protection that might be necessary ?† Whenever the Corporation of Tynemouth, which was a poor body, endeavoured to claim that protection, the rich corporation of the Commissioners would carry the litigation up to the House of Lords, and again there would be this wasteful and wicked expenditure of public money. They had exhausted every means of peaceful persuasion to try and induce the proposers of the Bill to do something that would render Clause 4 operative. They did not object to the principle of the Bill, and had no desire to render the Tyne less capable of floating the "Lord Nelson" or the "Mauretania," which only a few months ago was going in and out of that river like a steam launch. It could not be urged that if the House amended Clause 4 in the direction he suggested, that they would be ruining the great river of the North, or would render it less capable of bearing our merchant or naval vessels. Whatever this might mean to the Tyne Commission, to a large number of his constituents it was a matter of life and death. A great part of North Shields was largely dependent on the fishing industry, and the moment the fishing vessels were driven out, a large portion of his constituency would be driven into misery and starvation, unless Clause 4 was made operative. It would be idle to say that the people of Tynemouth had their remedy at law. If this question arose, and the fishing vessels were driven out, long before they could take their case to the highest tribunal, the House of Lords, the vessels would be driven to other ports, and trade once driven away was not easily recovered. Even if they succeeded, and he had been advised that it was impossible to mandamus the Commissioners under Clause 4, that proceeding would be of small utility, because by the time they had obtained a mandamus they would have ceased to have any trade worth protecting. He hoped he had said enough to prove that he was not asking the House to interfere with the proper or even unlimited dredging of the River Tyne. All he asked was that some form of words should be added to Clause 4, a clause inserted by the Committee upstairs for their protection—but which in the form it now appeared was not worth the paper on which it was printed—so as to make it operative. He hoped he had also made it clear that he did not wish to harass the Commissioners or put them into a position in which they could be harassed. He was quite content to abide by any *bona fide* attempt which engineers could devise for their protection. It might prove that the very best protection that engineering science was able to afford might be ineffectual to protect their quays from injury. It might be that they, as a small borough of the river, might be called upon to sacrifice some of their trade and revenue for the benefit of the whole community. If that sacrifice was demanded of them, they would not shrink from it, but before it was demanded they had a right to demand that all that science could suggest should be done to protect them, so that the poorest and most congested part of the harbour borough should not be deprived of the trade upon which it was so entirely dependent. He begged to move.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said the House had to remember that a strong effort had been made to get away from the real issue, as between the Commissioners and the Corporations of Tynemouth and Shields. This Amendment was not an attempt to interfere in any way with any scheme which the Tyne Commissioners might have for improving the River Tyne; it was an attempt to protect two small Corporations against a wealthy one, and insure that their interests should be protected in a large project that was going to be carried out. One would naturally have thought after the litigation which had taken place, lasting fifteen days, and which would have cost the Tynemouth Corporation £15,000 had they failed, that when this Bill came before the House, there would, at all events, have been some interpretation of the judgment delivered by the Judge in favour of the Corporation. There was no protection whatever for either Tynemouth or Shields, and if any dispute arose a wealthy Corporation could always force a small Corporation into the Law Courts, and litigation of that kind ought to be avoided. All that was asked to-night was that in the event of the Tyne Commission carrying out any scheme which might damage the Corporations of Tynemouth and South Shields the Board of Trade should have power to step in and settle any dispute that arose. It was not only these Corporations which opposed this unlimited scope being given to the Tyne Commission in regard to the improvements they decided to carry out. He held in his hand letters from a number of labour associations who all asked that some attempt should be made by this House to get a clause inserted in the Bill to compel the Tyne Commissioners to provide protective works. At the Tynemouth fishing quay two-thirds of the members of these labour associations were employed, and as the hon. Member for Tynemouth had said, if these works were going to be carried out without some protection being afforded, this was going to be a big loss to Tynemouth. He might point out that in other times these trade unionists had been treated by the Tyne Commission in the same high handed way as the Commission was now treating these two small Corporations. The men had appealed to the Commission time and again to be able to state their case, but the Commission was unapproachable and would listen to nobody. They thought they had only to come to this House to obtain unlimited power. As one who had had the privilege of a seat on a Corporation for fifteen years he could quite sympathise with the attitudes taken up by the Corporations of Tynemouth and South Shields, and he submitted that it was the duty of this House before giving this unlimited power to the Tyne Commission to see that these small corporations that were likely to be brought into conflict with this wealthy Commission should not be rushed into the Law Courts and forced to spend thousands of the ratepayers money. On these grounds he seconded the Amendment.

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† The hon. Member had a consequential Amendment on the Paper, providing that—"In the event of any disagreement, the question of the necessity for and character of any protective works shall be determined by a person to be appointed by the Board of Trade on the application of the Commissioners or of the corporations of Tynemouth and South Shields, or either of them."

Amendment proposed to the Bill—

"In page 3, line 12, to leave out the words 'works as may hereafter,' and insert the words 'or remedial works as shall'"—(*Mr. Herbert Craig*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. LUKE WHITE (East Yorkshire, Buckrose) said that as Chairman of the Committee which considered this Bill for six days it might be desirable that he should make a few remarks with regard to the proposal now before the House. The last speaker had referred to the Tyne Commission as a wealthy corporation. All he could say, from the evidence given before the Committee, was that they were a very large and important body and were wealthy because they had tremendous interests to maintain. He believed their income was something like £400,000 a year. They had had to borrow money, and their liabilities at the present time he believed were more than £4,000,000, whilst there was the prospect of a very great amount of capital expenditure in the near future. He mentioned this because they must look upon the Tyne Commission as a large public body whose only object could be the interests of the people who occupied large establishments on both sides of the river. Fifteen Commissioners, he believed, were elected by the Corporations, fifteen represented the shipowners, the traders, and other interests connected with the Tyne, and two Commissioners were appointed by the Board of Trade. Three Commissioners represented Tynemouth and three South Shields, so that the interests of these two towns were represented on the Commission. He was not going into the legal proceedings which had taken place in the Court of Chancery between the Borough of Tynemouth and the Tyne Commission. The Committee, for the purpose of their inquiry and for the purpose of considering the Bill, assumed that the judgment of Mr. Justice Warrington would, although there was an appeal pending, stand. The hon. Member who moved had not informed the House that under that judgment an inquiry had to be made and that the Tyne Commissioners had to give full compensation to Tynemouth for any damage caused by the dredging so far as the fish quay was concerned. That, therefore, was outside the Bill. He did not inform the House either that in the Act of 1861, which empowered the Tyne Commissioners to dredge to the extent of 22 feet, there was a clause giving by arbitration full compensation to all persons, whether corporations, traders, or otherwise, for any damage they might sustain owing to that dredging. They knew that for some years the Tyne Commissioners had dredged deeper than 22 feet; in fact, the Committee were told that it would have been impossible for the "Mauretania," which was built on the Tyne, to have got out to sea unless the dredging had been below 22 feet. After hearing evidence and speeches of counsel the Committee came to the conclusion, in view of the legal proceedings which had taken place, not to adopt the proposal of the Tyne Commissioners to limit the dredging to 30 feet down to which they had already gone, but that it was necessary that the Commissioners should have the power to dredge to any extent in order that the largest war and other ships should be able to go up and down the River Tyne. He was glad to say that those opposing the Bill fell in with that suggestion. It was, therefore, a matter of consideration for the Committee as to what should be done with regard to the question of damages for any loss which might be sustained by reason of these increased powers of dredging, and the promoters inserted a clause which was not in the Bill as originally proposed, making the provisions of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act applicable, so as to give compensation to any person who might hereafter receive damage owing to the increased powers of dredging. The words were very wide, and he was certain they would include the fish quay to which reference had been made if it was injuriously affected by the powers given under the Bill. The words were—

> "That they would receive compensation in respect of lands injuriously affected by the execution of the undertaking or works authorised by this Bill."

That clause repeated the clause in the Act of 1861.

MR. HERBERT CRAIG: And refers to structural and physical damage only.

MR. LUKE WHITE said it went further than that, because if the corporation were not able to get the revenue arising from duties which they had levied on vessels coming to the quay they would be injuriously affected. He might say that the fish quay had been shown to be not adapted for the use of those trawlers which were now using the Tyne in order to bring their fish to the different towns on the river. It was all very well some sixty years ago, when ordinary fishing boats went up the river, but it was very different now when it was used by trawlers. They had evidence before the Committee that the Corporation of Tynemouth themselves some years ago found their fish quay was not suitable for the purpose, and they called in engineers to get out plans and specifications for a pier suitable for trawlers, but the ratepayers voted against the expenditure of the money. The Corporation of Tynemouth and the Corporation of South Shields each had a plan to put upon the Commissioners the duty of erecting certain protective works which would obviate any damage. An engineer gave evidence that that was the twelfth plan he had prepared to protect the borough of Tynemouth and also in another case the borough of South Shields from any damage owing to increased dredging; but the Committee, after hearing the evidence of the engineer for the Tyne Commissioners, came to the conclusion that it was absolutely impossible that it could itself suggest that Parliament should place these proposals upon the Tyne Commissioners. It would have done very great injury indeed to the river and the interests which depended upon it. It might for the time being have done something to protect Tynemouth, but it would have done irreparable damage to the shipping. The proposal was that there should be placed on each side of the river three groynes or projections running a very large way towards the centre, and that these groins would, by breaking the waves, do something to obviate the range from the sea. But the Committee felt that if they had attempted to place the duty on the Commissioners of carrying out that proposal it would have done very great damage to the shipping industry. It would have materially lessened the width of the river, and placed in jeopardy many steamers and fishing boats which could not possibly in time of storm have come up the river. The Committee had come to the conclusion that Section 5 would be sufficient to give to the boroughs of Tynemouth and South Shields, and to all the traders who wanted projections running out into the river—jetties and so forth—every protection which they required. The Act of 1861 did so, and the evidence was to the effect that this clause would be effective for the same purpose. But during the proceedings counsel for the Tyne Commissioners said he would give an undertaking which would be placed on record, and in addition to being liable to pay damage to any person who might be injuriously affected by the provisions of the Bill he would give an undertaking that the Commissioners would in the near future take all such steps as might be necessary to do away with any damage which was likely to arise from the increase of dredging. It was stated in evidence that although the Commissioners were not under any obligation under the Act of 1861 to do anything in the way of placing on the river protective works in order to guard against any damage in dredging to 22 feet, yet the Commissioners had spent enormous sums of money in order to insert in the river at various points what were described as wave traps in order to break the waves and so militate against any damage which might arise from the dredging. The Committee, after considering that statement, came to the conclusion that in addition to this Clause 5 giving damages by arbitration they would place Clause 4 in the Bill, as showing that not only were the Tyne Commissioners liable to damages, but that also the Act of Parliament itself placed upon the Commissioners the duty of making provision for the carrying out of protective works which might be necessary owing to the increased dredging. As to the Amendment, the effect would be this. Supposing the borough of Tynemouth brought forward their scheme and said: "According to our engineer this scheme would obviate any damage arising to this particular borough, and we therefore ask the Commissioners to put down these protective works," the Tyne Commissioners, if it was the same engineer that appeared before the Committee would give evidence against the scheme and give their reasons why they should not recommend the Tyne Commissioners to adopt any such plan, because it would be detrimental to the interests of the River Tyne. Assuming that that was the position of matters, how would this Amendment affect the question? The borough of Tynemouth would be able to go to the Board of Trade, which would appoint an engineer to decide between the engineer of the borough of Tynemouth and the engineer of the Tyne Commissioners, and assuming that the borough of Tynemouth obtained their protective works and the engineer appointed by the Board of Trade gave his decision that the works should be erected, they would be placed in the river at the expense of the Tyne Commissioners at a cost of not less than £100,000. They had said that the works would not effect the object, would be detrimental to the interests of the river and would not protect the Port of Tynemouth, and they would be liable under Clause 5 for all the damage incurred owing to these protective works being defective, and they would also have in the future to carry out works under Clause 4, under the direction of their own engineer. After hearing evidence for six days the Committee could come to no conclusion or say that any particular work or scheme which was then placed before them should be inserted in the Bill, and placed as a duty upon the Tyne Commissioners. It was a very delicate question, this construction of protective works in order to obviate the danger or difficulty of the range from the sea, especially in time of storm, because the Tyne at this particular point was exposed at certain periods of the year, and when the wind was in a certain quarter, to a very great amount of damage from storms. They therefore came to the conclusion that with regard to the Tyne

Commissioners if any person or works were injuriously affected in the work of dredging, the Commissioners should be liable to make it good. But in order to show that in any case which might arise hereafter, if the Commissioners failed in carrying out protective works in order to obviate that damage, they placed in Clause 4 that it was the duty of the Commissioners not only to pay the damage under Clause 5, but so far as they possibly could to carry out works of a protective nature which would obviate the difficulty arising from the dredging given in the Bill. The Committee after carefully considering all the evidence came to the unanimous conclusion that the safeguards to the people concerned in the trade of the river were such as Parliament ought to give, and all the interests were safeguarded by Clauses 4 and 5.

MR. HERBERT CRAIG said he had a letter from the hon. Member's colleague in which he said he would support the Amendment.

*MR. SPEAKER: It is a very unusual thing to go behind the statement of the Chairman in a matter of that sort. If there is any dispute as to whether there was dissent or not the hon. Member can state his particular views.

MR. LUKE WHITE said he stated publicly in the presence of all four Members of the Committee that there was no dissent and that the Committee was unanimous. Neither he nor any of the other Members had any interest in the River Tyne, and they were unanimous in the conclusion that the Bill was absolutely necessary in the interests of the trade of the river, and he asked the House to pass this clause and to reject the Amendment.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields), who was indistinctly heard, said he was the Member for one of the boroughs putting forward the claim which had been advanced by Tynemouth, and he might be able to deal with the subject, not in a very combative spirit, but so as at all events to throw light on one or two points on which a lawyer could give the House some information. He did not speak in any sense as a member of the Government. The hon. Member for the Buckrose Division had made one statement which showed, he thought, that there had been a misconception in regard to the nature of the compensation provided for in the Bill. Let him invite the House to consider exactly what the grievance complained of was. The Tyne Commissioners were asking for greater privileges of dredging, and they had received an unusual but not unwise privilege. They were permitted to dredge to any depth that they pleased—not near the quay wall on either side of the river, but they might increase the depth of the navigable channel itself. The Tyne was really an unbroken stream of highway in the strict sense of the term, because on each side they had great works and there were many flourishing industries on the banks of the river. That made it very difficult for vessels to lie there. Nobody objected to the river being dredged, and this Amendment was not directed against the passage of the Bill, but simply asked that the Board of Trade or some other Departmental authority should be chosen as the proper judge to decide what should be the character and sufficiency of the protective works. One of the suggestions was that before they came to the narrow part of the river something should be done to break the force of the waves. There was much discussion before the Committee as to the sufficiency of the various schemes. The House, however, was not being asked to decide upon that point. The Committee decided that the Commissioners ought to provide some protective works. Therefore, it was not a question of whether this Bill should pass or not, because everybody wanted the Bill to go through, and they all desired the river to be properly dredged. Nobody even opposed the depth to which it was proposed the river should be dredged. As he had stated before, the only question was who was to decide as to the sufficiency of the protective works to be carried out. The Commission was of opinion that the works proposed would be ineffective. He thought there should be some Department deputed to see whether the proposed works were adequate or not. Under a misapprehension the Chairman appeared to think that the clause which the Committee inserted would be sufficient to meet claims for compensation for damage done to the industry of the town, but that was not the case. The compensation given by the Bill was only such as could be got under the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act; that was to say, it was only such compensation as could be given to the owners of adjacent land for any injury to their land; but the persons really affected were not merely the owners of adjacent land; but those people who brought their ships up the Tyne to be repaired. There was a great population in the vicinity dependent upon the repairing of ships, and if the ships did not come up the Tyne to be repaired that population could not stay there. It was, therefore, in the interest of the borough that there should be protective works. For that reason the hon. Member for the Buckrose Division was under a misconception when he said that the compensation was adequate, because they could only compensate the landowners. As far as compensation was concerned, he did not think the provisions of the Bill were adequate. He thought that one or other of the suggestions made as to improvements before they reached the channel ought to be adopted. He assured the House that there was no case in which compensation under such circumstances could be paid to a town or to a destroyed industry. Therefore, in this Bill compensation was totally irrelevant, and it was simply a question of protective works and preventing injury being done, because once the injury was done no compensation was possible. The only question for them to decide was who was to settle the character and nature of the protective works. The provision in this Bill said that the Commissioners were to carry out certain protective works which might be necessary in order to lessen or obviate any damage. Therefore, if they put up any works which in any degree lessened the mischief they would satisfy that clause. The clause putting on the Commissioners the duty of deciding on these protective works was vague and indefinite, and as the Bill stood the matter could only be decided by recourse to a Court of law, and the corporation would have no *locus standi*.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) said that when he heard that the Attorney-General was likely to intervene in this debate he could not conceal from himself a feeling that it was somewhat of a pity that his connection with Tyneside should have compelled him to intervene. He was glad, however, that the Attorney-General had emphasised so fully the fact that he was speaking not as Attorney-General, but as a private Member, and therefore, later on, they would have the official exposition of this measure from the President of the Board of Trade. He rose in order to oppose the Amendment, and to support the action taken by the Committee. He thought the opponents of the Bill had taken upon themselves a somewhat unusual, and if he might say so, a very important responsibility, in questioning as they were doing by this Amendment the decision arrived at by the Committee upstairs. Let the House remember that this was not a Bill promoted by a company in the strict sense of the term. The Bill was not brought forward with the object of profit on the part of the promoters, but it was promoted entirely in the public interest by a body acting under statutory powers and in the interest of the general well-being of all the trades and industries situated along the banks of the Tyne. He thought he was correct in saying that the Tyne Commissioners had never received a penny from any public concern whatever. Nor had they ever been allowed to draw upon the local rates. Therefore, the opponents of the Bill were taking upon themselves a very great responsibility in objecting at this stage to a measure which had been passed unanimously by the Committee. It was on record that the preamble of the Bill was passed unanimously by the Committee. [An Hon. Member: It was not opposed.] He was aware of that, and it was also true that the opponents did not appear on the clauses when the preamble had been sanctioned by the Committee. It was true that South Shields submitted a clause to the judgment of the Committee practically in the form of the

Amendment on the Paper in the name of his hon. friend the Member for Sunderland. That clause was carefully considered by the Committee upstairs. Having the guidance of some of the most expert members of the Parliamentary Bar, the Committee were in a vastly better position to judge of the merits of the case and to arrive at a proper judgment than Members of the House were in now. If the practice of questioning the verdict of a Committee which had sat upstairs were carried to any considerable extent in the House, he could conceive that there would be very great difficulty in getting Members to serve on Private Bill Committees at all. The Attorney-General had said in answer to a question put by the hon. Member for Grimsby that he did not know of any such case of compensation as was proposed in the Bill. He had in his hand a list of fourteen Acts by which Harbour and Conservancy Boards were acting under exactly the same powers as the Bill conferred on the Tyne Commissioners, while the Dover Harbour Act of 1906 contained precisely the same provision. He gathered from the observations of the Attorney-General that he was perfectly satisfied with this Amendment. The hon. and learned Gentleman said that it would do all that was wanted. He asked the House to consider the Amendment along with another on the Paper standing in the name of his hon. friend the Member for Tynemouth. The two Amendments were practically one, for the second was consequential on the passing of the first. The second Amendment provided that a certain course was to be taken in the event of any disagreement, though it did not say whether it was a disagreement between the Commissioners themselves, or between the Commissioners on the one hand and the local authorities on the other. The Chairman of the Committee had pointed out that if the Board of Trade believed that either the Tynemouth Corporation, or any other corporation had a grievance under this Bill the board could appoint an arbiter or engineer belonging to the Board, and if he agreed with the local engineer, and ultimately it turned out that the two acting together had not produced a satisfactory plan of protective works, the Commissioners would be compelled to act upon the judgment which was formed by the representative of the Board of Trade. If that plan proved a failure, the Tyne Commissioners would have been put to considerable expense, and they would be landed in damages and costs, although not at all responsible for the nature of the protective works erected, and although they had declared from the outset that their expert authority was against the constructive or protective works recommended by the borough engineer of Tynemouth, assisted by the representative of the Board of Trade. He hoped that that was a position which the President of the Board of Trade would not accept. The hon. Member for Tynemouth had laid considerable stress on the fact that the borough of Tynemouth had been led into considerable litigation. He said the total cost would be something like £20,000. The hon. Member for Sunderland put it at £15,000. All that expense had arisen out of the action which was heard before Mr. Justice Warrington. It was true that they had got a judgment from that Court, but it was under appeal. Assuming that the judgment was upheld, they would be in a position to have all that money, or the greater part of it, refunded to them. At all events, they would be entitled to damages and costs in the action. If the judgment was not upheld, it would mean that they were not entitled to damages. The claim put forward in this case by the opponents of the Bill reminded him of the claim of a woman who lost a hen. She not only claimed for the value of the hen, but for the eggs which the hen would have produced in a given time, and for the chickens which those eggs might have been expected to produce. That kind of claim might go on *ad infinitum.* This was really a case where the natural development of the trade and commerce of the country demanded that additional powers should be conferred on public bodies, and they had to take the risk of the loss incidental to such changes in the public life of the country. He had the greatest possible pleasure in supporting the action of the Committee, and in asking the House to reject the Amendment in the interest of the general welfare of the people located in the Tyne valley.

Mr. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne) said he could not support the Amendment because if put into operation it would only affect the Tynemouth and South Shields Corporations. Surely everyone on the river ought to have the same right. There were other reasons why he could not support the Amendment. They had had it clearly stated by the Chairman of the Committee that in every Bill of a like character relating to a navigable river there was the same protection, and if there was to be an umpire appointed in one case they ought to have him in the case of all rivers, and it would remain for a Government Department to take action entirely apart from this Bill. Another feature of the matter was that at least £100,000 was necessary in order to erect sufficient protection for the fish quay to meet present-day requirements. If any further dredging powers were given to the Tyne Commission he thought it would be admitted by all experts who knew the situation that the fish quay did not meet present-day requirements, and consequently the only thing to meet the situation would be to make a dock of an entirely different character owing to the geographical and exposed position of the quay at the entrance to the river. If certain protective works were proposed which would not protect the quay they could fall back on Clause 5 for compensation. He spoke on behalf of the Newcastle Corporation who heartily desired that the Bill should go through, and if any such arrangements was to be made whereby an umpire was to come in it ought to apply to every other port in the United Kingdom.

Sir J. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich) said he had had considerable experience of Committees both as member and chairman, and he asked the House to pause before they reversed the decision of a Committee whch had heard all the evidence and considered it with care. The Attorney-General had told them that the borough of Tynemouth, as a borough, was not enabled under the Bill to get compensation under the Lands Clauses Act. It was rather a strong measure that on an Amendment to a private Bill they should amend that Act. It might be that that Act was deficient and that it provided no compensation to a borough or to poor burghers; but they should not amend that Act in the way suggested by the Amendment before the House. It was alleged that Clause 4 provided no machinery for carrying it into effect. He had put a question as to the accuracy or otherwise of that statement and he hoped that the House might yet get some guidance on that legal point. If it was adjudged that Clause 4 was deficient then they might be persuaded to amend it to that extent.

Mr. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow) said that he supported the Bill as it stood. When the Bill was first promoted there was no clause granting protection to Tynemouth or North Shields; but the Committee after being addressed by a deputation from these places inserted Clause 4 for their protection. The river Tyne was essentially a shipbuilding river, and it was only at its mouth where fishing took place. From North and South Shields all the way up to Newcastle the towns on both banks were almost entirely dependent on the shipbuilding industry. Both employers and operatives in that industry were agreed that the Tyne was very much behind the times, and they were consequently anxious to bring it into a position to compete in naval and mercantile shipbuilding with other shipbuilding centres in the country. If such powers as were given in the Bill were not vested in the Tyne Commissioners the river would remain very much in its present position. It had been said that some trade unionists had protested against the past action of the Tyne Commission, but as a representative of that class he thought that that should not weigh with them that night; it should not enter into the discussion of this measure. What they wanted was to bring a fair share of shipbuilding work to the Tyne and then they of the trade union world would try and persuade the Tyne Commission to use their employees in a fair manner. It had been said that the fishing industry at Tynemouth would be ruined owing to the deep dredging of the river; but it had been admitted in evidence by the opponents of the Bill that it was only on few occasions in stormy weather that the fishing vessels were inconvenienced why lying at the fish quay. There was no evidence that the fishing industry had suffered or decreased. On the contrary, it had increased. The Amendment was, he believed, proposed for the purpose of trying to get the Committee to impose on the Tyne Commission the duty or obligation of building a new dock at the mouth of the river. In his judgment the case against the Bill was exceedingly weak, and in the interest of the great mass of the population on the Tyne he hoped the Bill would be carried in its present form.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The House has had the opportunity given it of hearing the discussion and the opinion of my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General, who is a Member for one of the constituencies specially and particularly interested in the subject under debate. The House of course, understands that the hon. and learned Gentleman spoke in his capacity as Member for South Shields and not in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown. As very often occurs in debates of this character where hon. Gentlemen, who have no special concern nor particular connection with the subject matter, take part in that discussion, there have been a great many speeches from both sides of the House which seem to put a very powerful and cogent argument from both points of view. We have had statements on behalf of the corporations affected and statements on behalf of the Tyneside Commissioners which are of the greatest importance, and they deserve attentive and careful consideration for long hours and probably long days. The House of Commons is not in a position to weigh evidence in detail or to embark on a critical examination of highly technical and complicated local history. It is the position of the Government in these debates not to support particular local interests, but to try and deal with these questions on open, public, general, and, if necessary, national lines. It is only on these very general lines that I shall venture to offer a few words of counsel to the House. There seem to me to be three clear reasons why the House should not accept the Amendment which has been so ably and so effectively moved. First of all, we are not dealing with a dispute between private and public interests. We are dealing with a dispute between two sets of public authorities. One of those public authorities is a body possessing far wider powers and is of a far more general character than the others. The Tyne Commissioners are an elective body, representative not of one part of the Tyne but of the whole interests of the river; they are an elective body upon which all sections of the community dwelling on the banks of the Tyne are represented. The Corporation who are opposing this Bill which is now before the House, have themselves one-sixth of the representation on the parent body whose action they are disputing. I agree that where there is a collision and conflict between legitimate interests it is very desirable that it should be adjusted and compacted in a friendly manner. But when no compact is possible, when no agreement can be achieved or come to between the parties, then this House has to choose. Now I submit that if this House has to choose between the parties, the tendency which should influence the House in its decision should be to prefer the interest of the whole to the interest of a part in any decision that is to be arrived at. Not only is the interest of the Tyne Commissioners the wider public interest of the two, but it must be remembered that they are in this particular engaged in a work of general and national importance, the deepening of the River Tyne. The Tyne Commissioners have for fifty years lavished a continual and unabated care on improving the navigation of the Tyne, and fortune and prosperity all over that neighbourhood has been notably and sensibly advanced by their action. Some time ago the "Mauretania" grounded in the Tyne, and great injury would have been done to the whole future of the port if no efforts had been made to improve the navigation and to give the river that deeper channel which is indispensable to any part of our maritime regions which wish to compete in maritime commerce. The "Mauretania" and vessels of that class are of great importance, but they are not the only vessels which are important to our maritime ports. That is a point I need not labour, but I may just say that the Admiralty attach a great and sensible importance to the deepening and improving of the channel of the Tyne. That is the first point I commend to the House. If we have to deal with complicated conflicting interests, we should prefer the wider public interest to the smaller. Here we have a proposal put forward that this question should be removed from the purview of the common law, and the Courts of the land, and that a special arrangement should be made to provide for the settlement of disputes by arbitration. Arbitration is a very excellent remedy, but compulsory arbitration is a very different matter. If there is to be arbitration it must always be by agreement between the parties. If that agreement fails, the parties are entitled to fall back on their rights at common law. There is no possibility of obtaining agreement from the Tyne Commissioners as to the settlement of disputes which may arise in consequence of this measure by means of arbitration. It is proposed by the Amendment that the Board of Trade should be the arbitrating authority. The functions of the Board of Trade have been continuously and notably extended in modern times. There is hardly a year that passes without some new extension taking place. I think it would be very undesirable that we should plunge in uninvited and unwelcomed as an arbitrator in disputes for the settlement of which there is already ample provision in the ordinary law of the land, and, speaking for myself, after careful consideration of the subject, I do not think I could undertake ,without I am further advised, the function which this Amendment seeks to place on the Board of Trade. If arbitration cannot be agreed upon then the parties must fall back on their rights at common law. I have been carefully studying the text of the Bill, and I am bound to say I think there is a good deal in what has been said by my hon. friend the Attorney-General, and the hon. Member for North Shields, with regard to the wording of Clause 4. Clause 4 provides that—

> "It shall be the duty of the Commissioners to make provision for and carry out such protective works as may hereafter be necessary in order to lessen or obviate any damage likely to arise, etc."

I think the words "to lessen or obviate" do have the effect of making the clause a very weak and thin protection. I think they have the effect of making the clause a less effective protection than was intended by the Committee, and was desired by the Tyne Commissioners themselves. Those gentlemen assure me that they do desire to deal fairly and frankly with all the interests affected by the public improvements they are making, and, if it can be done at a reasonable cost and with fair regard to other interests in the river—and many conflicting interests are affected—they do desire to be bound to make such protective works as can be devised to diminish or limit any injury which may result to other parties from the general improvements. It is quite clear that as long as the words "lessen or" are included in that clause, there is no really effective protection, because any work, however inadequate, any protection, however insufficient, be it only 2 per cent. of the damage caused, would come within the legal definition of the clause of lessening the amount of damage. I have had an opportunity this afternoon of discussing with both parties, and not at all with the idea of over-riding the Committee or of altering the provisions of the Bill, but as a matter of friendly agreement, I shall take upon myself to suggest to the House other words which would make the clause substantially more effective than it is at present. I should propose, if the House would reject the Amendment which has now been moved, in Clause 4, page 3, line 13, after the word "necessary" to insert the words "and practicable," and in line 13 to omit the words "lessen or," and in line 13 after the word "obviate" to insert the words "or counteract." The clause would then read: "It shall be the duty of the Commissioners to make provision for and carry out such protective works as may be necessary and practicable in order to obviate or counteract any damage likely to arise from any increased range," etc. The effect of that I am assured by legal authority—and I am sure my hon. and learned friend will support me in this—will be to make Clause 4 a real protection to the Corporation who are concerned and will expose the Tyne Commissioners to a real obligation to put up such protecting works as may be practicable to obviate or counteract any damage which may arise. I should propose, therefore, to move the Amendment if, and when, the Amendment now moved is rejected. There is only one other reason why I would urge the House to support the Bill. It is the reason which has been so fully and forcibly stated by my right hon. friend the Member for South Shields, and also by the hon. Member for the Wansbeck Division. If those who have not a special interest in this subject find difficulties in deciding on which side right may lie in such complicated matters, the Committee have had every advantage from which the majority of hon. Members to-night are debarred, and, if the arguments against the Tyne Commissioners appear to be effective and cogent, let the House remember that those arguments were fully presented by advocates almost as able as my hon. and learned friend to the Committee which in a period of six days discussed and examined this whole question, and which after the exhaustive inquiry came to the decision that, whatever had been said, and may be said on behalf of the Corporation opposing this Bill, the main right of the prevailing public interest lies upon the side of the measure and the Tyne Commissioners. I, therefore, ask the House to reject the Amendment, and, in so rejecting it, they will be acting upon three broad and simple principles which ought to govern the action of this House in regard to legislation of this class. They will be preferring the larger interest of the whole to the smaller interest of the part; they will be preferring in the ultimate issue the common law of the land to another special arrangement which would have to be enforced against the agreement and will of one of the parties concerned; and they will be supporting the Committee of the House of Commons specially delegated to inquire into this matter, and who have decided unanimously in favour of the course which I now recommend the House to adopt.

MR. J. JOHNSON (Gateshead) said he could not but think that the movers of the Amendment had very exaggerated views as to what damage would accrue, and he understood that the Tyne Commissioners had always been prepared that reasonable damage should be given. When the Bill was presented he had objections to it, because there was no compensation clause; but, after a very careful and exhaustive hearing in Committee, extending over six days, a clause for compensation was inserted, and all his objections had gone. He believed it was absolutely and imperatively necessary, in view of the increased tonnage of ships, if the commerce and shipbuilding in the Tyne was to go on, that the channel should be deepened. Anything which would restrict or prohibit the development of shipbuilding on the Tyne would be a very great detriment to the working men of Tyneside, and for that reason he thought every facility and encouragement should be given to the Commissioners to make the necessary improvement, so that the Tyne might maintain its position in competitive capacity, and become effective and useful. In view of the clause which had been suggested by the President of the Board of Trade he did not see why they could not agree to withdraw the Amendment. He hoped in view of what had been stated that the mover of the Amendment would see his way clear to withdraw it. If it was not withdrawn he should certainly vote against it, and in so doing he conended that he would be acting in the best interests of the workmen on the Tyne.

MR. HERBERT CRAIG asked leave to withdraw his Amendment on the understanding that the words proposed by the President of the Board of Trade would be inserted in the clause.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendments (in accordance with the statement of the President of the Board of Trade) made to the Bill.

Bill to be read the third time.

SUPPLY (ARMY ESTIMATES, 1908–9).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £2,005,000, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Expense of Grants, Pay, Allowances, Training, and Miscellaneous Charges of the Territorial Force (not exceeding 312,000 men), Imperial Yeomanry, and Volunteers, and Channel Islands and Colonial Militia, including the Permanent Staff, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909," resumed.

[Mr. Emmott, (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Question again proposed.

Mr. SEDDON (Lancashire, Newton) said that after listening to the speeches of the Jeremiahs in this House and reading the speeches made by the Jeremiahs in another place, he was glad to hear that the Territorial Army scheme was not the failure it had been stated to be. He wished to call the attention of the Secretary of State for War to some observations which he had made before upon this subject. One hon. Member had spoken of the local spirit which existed in his county. He might say that he possessed a strong county feeling himself, and he would certainly resent any backstairs interference with Lancashire. He wished to draw attention to the large sum of money which would be voted as grants to the County Associations. No less than £1,000,000 would be paid into the funds of the counties to keep up their respective establishments and help the different units of the Territorial scheme. He thought it would do a good deal towards the success of the Territorial scheme if they had more democratic control in regard to the management. He was conscious that the Secretary for Ireland only yesterday in Committee stated that he did not understand the meaning of the word democratic, and it was being used in so many directions that he himself had considerable difficulty in understanding what it meant. He had a definition of his own, and so far as his definition was concerned he should use the term democratic to include the representation of all classes in the community. The county councils in each county were anxious for the success of the Territorial scheme. He was proud to confess that many Lords-Lieutenant had shown a good deal of interest and had asked for the assistance of all sections of the community, and especially of the class which he had the honour to represent in the House. In several counties, however, that policy had not been pursued. He thought it was a fatal error for the success of the scheme that representatives of the working men, the leaders of trade unions or friendly societies who came into immediate contact with the workers, should not be placed upon those committees or upon the council of the county in order to give their advice and in some degree to give confidence to the workers that those committees were not being worked in the interests of one section of the community alone. The hon. and gallant Member for Fareham had said that under this scheme it appeared to him that the Exchequer were trying to throw the cost upon the county gentlemen, and that he hoped the county gentlemen would not bear that cost. He took the same view but from a different reason altogether, because if the county gentlemen for any reason were called upon to aid the grants from the Government to their county it would give them a rather enlarged idea of their own importance on those committees, and that would create suspicion in the minds of the workers who, because of their poverty, could not help in that direction. He thought the Secretary of State for War would be wisely advised in making the grant as liberal as possible in the direction of efficiency, so that there should be no call upon the private purse of county gentlemen. If his reading of history was right, the county gentlemen for many long years had thrown this burden upon the community which in its origin was borne by them. He was aware that that was in the days gone by, and they would have to move further along the lines of democracy before they got back to the old state of things when the landed gentry provided for the defence of the country. He was very anxious for the success of the Territorial scheme, and he endorsed the remark that the democracy would not tolerate conscription. If the Territorial scheme broke down, some other means would have to be provided, but so far as conscription was concerned it might be a real danger in the minds of some people, but fortunately they were a very small number. He thought the Territorial scheme, if worked upon democratic lines, would be a valuable safeguard so far as the defence of the country was concerned. Although it might appear that he was preaching a class distinction he wished to say that he had no such idea in his mind. The defence of the country was a common obligation, no matter to which class of the community they belonged. There ought to be equal facilities for every section of the community to show its patriotism, and one method would be by widening the scope and the character of the county committees so that representatives of the whole community and direct representatives of the working men should be upon them, giving all their help and advice, and securing that confidence from the workers to whom the right hon. Gentleman was appealing to become members of his Territorial Force. He might be told that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but "Volunteer" seemed to be a name that appealed to the average Britisher. He resented compulsion. "Territorial" was a big mouthful, and the abbreviation was not quite as pleasant as it might be. No man liked to be classed with the canine breed, and to be called a terrier was not quite so pleasant as to be called a Volunteer. He gave the right hon. Gentleman credit for making the conditions easier so that members of the force need not run the risk of losing their employment, but he would like the right hon. Gentleman to exercise his undoubted ingenuity and intelligence some quiet afternoon in devising a new name. He believed the dropping of the name "Volunteer" had created a lot of alarm in the mind of the worker. The first debates in the House and the statements sent out to commanding officers gave a wrong impression altogether of the intention of the Secretary of State. A good deal of the misapprehension had been removed by his altered attitude, and by the alteration in the information that had been given to commanding officers and others interested, but he would ask that the County Committees should be made as inclusive as possible so that every section of the community should be brought in and consulted. Further, he would be very pleased to know that instead of the name "Terrier" or "Territorialist" they could have something more approximating to the term "Volunteer," which would be more appreciated by the working men of the country.

EARL WINTERTON said he rose merely by way of explanation of an interruption of his to the Financial Secretary, which, on consideration, perhaps scarcely did justice to the policy of the War Office with regard to the moneys set aside for horse-hire. He complained of the small amount of the grant given to the Yeomanry for the purpose of preliminary horse drills, and the hon. Gentleman said he had had no complaints on that point. He made the interruption that already in one case that he knew of there had not been sufficient money to provide for the horse-hire for these preliminary drills, and the money had had to come out of the pockets of someone in the regiment. It was only fair to say that the grant to-day was larger than it was formerly. At the same time, he urged that it was still scarcely adequate for the purpose, and he believed the right hon. Gentleman would find that in the majority of the Yeomanry regiments money had to be provided out of the pockets of the men, of the squadron leaders, or of the commanding officers. The money given, he believed, was £250 per regiment. That was very much less than a sovereign per man, and he was afraid that something like £2 to £3 per man was required in order to obtain horses for preliminary drill, if the proper number of drills were to be held. This was really all of a part with the policy which had always been pursued with regard to the Volunteers and the old Yeomanry, viz., of making the commanding officers, officers, and men make up the difference between the amount of money given by the Government and the amount required in order to make a regiment efficient, and he thought, now that this Act had been brought in, and especially as it had been heralded by the right hon. Gentleman as a democratic Act, that all cost of maintenance should be taken off the shoulders of officers and commanding officers. The public and the landowners were asked to contribute to keep up the Territorial Force. He was convinced that the system of asking those actually in the regiment to contribute to the cost of the regiment was a very bad system. It was not fair to accuse the right hon. Gentleman, as perhaps his interruption looked as if it did, of having made the situation worse; he had improved it, but he hoped he would sympathetically consider this point. He did not altogether agree with some hon. Gentlemen on that side who had said they should not spend too much money on this experiment, and that if they did so they were likely to starve the Regular Army. He did not at all agree with the policy embodied in the Act of last year, but as it was the law of the land he thought sufficient money should be spent on the Force to make it efficient, and the right hon. Gentleman should not hesitate to spend what might seem a large sum of money if, by so doing, he could secure efficiency.

Mr. WYNDHAM said his noble friend had pointed out that the Territorial scheme was now the law of the land. That was a practical fact which they could not ignore. They had had their say last year and the year before on the scheme, and it was now the only plan of having a second line which might expand to reinforce the first line of our military defences. At this moment so many people throughout the country were working as hard as they could to make successful progress with the scheme, that he would be sorry to discourage their efforts; and so much more work remained to be done that for his part he was not prepared to attempt any final criticism upon the progress which had already been made. But in the course of the debate one or two particular observations had been made, notably by the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean, which they could not allow to pass, because, if he was right, so many people were working for the success of the plan that the sooner their labours were brought to an abrupt conclusion the better. The right hon. Baronet put these broad points in the form of questions. What was the force for, and what was the cost? As regarded the object of the force, this was stated by the author of the scheme at Manchester on 26th November last, when he said it should be such as could encounter the invader who might chance to come, because after all there was some risk of his getting to these shores. The force being regarded as an insurance against an attempt at invasion, if the insurance was to be sound, the force must be a real force and of the right kind. Having determined what the right kind was, we must see that we got a sufficient number of men to join it. Without a force properly organised our opponent would be able to dictate terms at the beginning of the war, and certainly would create such a panic in the City as to destroy our war chest—the power of borrowing. Let the force be a real force. He did not wish to repeat his views on the artillery, but he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not push his passion for symmetry too far, and that he would not pinch the cavalry or Infantry he wanted in a district, in order to try to get Artillery, the value of which was more than doubtful. So far there was no doubt that the right hon. Gentleman had only got about half the force he required. It was of vital importance for the right hon. Gentleman to fill up his numbers. Let him not strain after symmetry, but where he could get Infantry get Infantry, where he could get Cavalry, get Cavalry, and in those few places where he could get Artillery get Artillery; but not at the expense of the other branches of the service. To attract recruits to his new force and to keep on the men who had served from four to six years let him help those who were trying to help him. Musketry was an important item. The question of the supply of horses was also an important matter that required attention. The overlapping of three men to one horse had a most serious effect on the scheme. There were two or three corps of Yeomanry who rode the same horses in rotation, and for an expeditionary force the remount officers would buy up all the horses they could get, and the Territorial Army would be practically unhorsed. But there were horse breeders and horse lovers in some parts of the country who would bring their own horses to drill. The right hon. Gentleman was right to act directly through the Board of Agriculture, but he should also act indirectly, making it worth while for the Yeoman who bred or owned horses to bring his horse to preliminary drill. Then in regard to musketry the regulation number of rounds could not be fired in less than two or three days without reckless waste of ammunition, and a man could not be expected to take that amount of time from his occupation and travel, perhaps, many miles to the range without encouragement. It was idle to ask men to join, officers to command, and County Associations to assist in organisation, if they were not adequately remunerated. That was all he had to say regarding outside training. A good deal more had been worked out with regard to inside training. He did not say it in the way of blame or criticism, but there had been a good deal of doubt as to what money was to be given for that purpose. Many of the Yeomanry regiments had only discovered at the last moment that there was to be a grant that could be used for that purpose, but some considered that the grant was neither sufficient, nor paid in time. Taking the training as a whole, he believed that success was not beyond their reach. Of course, it was difficult to ask yeomen who had served for three years to re-engage for another year at the minimum rate of pay; but he believed that that would not stand in the way, and he hoped that they might be met on that point by the right hon. Gentleman. But, as he had said, it was not impossible to do the thing even with the present rate of pay. The question of the depreciation of clothing, boots, and horses must be looked at. In regard to horses, what was wanted was that the yeoman should breed and own a horse of the right stamp; but were they prepared to give him £50 or £60 if that horse was destroyed in the public service? A man would not risk a horse worth £60 if he was only to get £10 for it if destroyed. What he would do was to hire a horse for the training at £3, and they would have regiment after regiment of Yeomanry hiring the same horses in succession. Then, if a man brought his own boots and a certain amount was to be paid for depreciation, the commanding officers should see that the boots were fit to march in and that the depreciation was a reality. As to clothing, he hoped the County Associations would give a grant for it so as to make the uniform attractive both to the man and to the female eye. As to all obligations, he believed that when the matter came to be properly understood, the difficulties would shrink and ultimately disappear. The great thing was to get the men to come in for four years, but if not, then for one year, and where there was a good excuse for leave it should be accepted rather than not have the men join at all. If this plan of the Government succeeded, he, for one, would be very pleased; but the real difficulty actually lay in this: how under any voluntary plan could they get anything like fairness between man and man? The officer in order to be efficient must go through a preliminary training and also be attached to a regular cavalry regiment, but the man who had not so much leisure must have at least fifteen days training in order to be of any value, and he thought a month ought to be the minimum for artillery. In order to obtain this element of fairness they must always allow a great deal of discretion to commanding officers. But the Government should also now say that no man in the country should be allowed to wear a distinctive uniform on high days and holidays or appear on the Commission of the Peace unless he had graduated in his early life in the Territorial Force. It would be found that they could not deal fairly by those who made these sacrifices as against those who made none, unless they saw that something approaching a slur was attached to every man who refused to give this minimum of service to his country.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said that the right hon. Gentleman had told the Committee that he had got the organisation of the force and the General Staff, but he had not got the men or the horses. He had asked the right hon. Gentleman a question about horses for the Territorial Army, but the only answer he got was that he had not enough horses for the Regular Army. The right hon. Gentleman knew that at the present time—nor, so far as he could see, in the future—the Territorial Army was of no use and that it could not possibly be moved for six weeks.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

CALENDAR REFORM BILL.

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged. Bill withdrawn.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, That the Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, praying to be represented by Counsel before the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill, be referred to that Committee.—(*Sir Henry Kimber.*)

ELEVEN O'CLOCK RULE.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) in moving that the House do now adjourn, gave notice that the Prime Minister would move the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule on Monday. He added that the notice would not necessarily be acted upon.

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 19*th June*, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London United Tramways Bill, as amended, to be considered upon Monday next.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Leven, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Cheltenham, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Black Park; Bryn; and Cwrty Bettws; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from West Penrith, against; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, &c., BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Three petitions from Abingdon, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Cheltenham, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberkenfig; Battersea; Brymbo; Coedpoeth; Coytrahem; Maesteg (two); Ogmore Vale; Rhosllanerchrugog; and Rhostyllen; to lie upon the Table.

LONDON PAVING EXPENSES BILL.

Petition from Battersea, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

METROPOLITAN SEWERS AND DRAINS BILL.

Petition from Battersea, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS (UNITED KINGDOM).

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 11th June; *Mr. Pike Pease*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 185.]

COLONIAL REPORTS (MISCELLANEOUS).

Copy presented, of Report No. 52 (Native Education in South Africa; Part III., Education in the Protectorates, by E. B. Sargant, Education Adviser to the High Commissioner for South Africa [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Report, No. 560 (St. Helena, Report for 1907) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports. Annual Series, Nos. 4016 to 4018 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Treasury Agreements for Construction of Works.

MARQUESS OF HAMILTON (Londonderry): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether there is a clause in all, and if not in all in what, Treasury agreements for departmental works that the Treasury shall be the sole judges of the construction of such agreements and of all matters and things therein referred to, and is the right thereby reserved ever exercised to the exclusion of the Courts of Justice; will he state how in practice the decision is arrived at; whether all parties interested are heard; whether the Law Officers are brought in or the matter decided by the Lords Commissioners, aided by their departmental

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

legal advisers, who drafted the agreement; and, if both sides have not the opportunity of being heard, is the case and opinion available for inspection by the other side so as to give an opportunity for correcting mistakes.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Treasury does not enter into agreements for departmental works, but the Question may refer to the few cases in which the Treasury has entered into agreements for the construction of light railways in Ireland. Such a clause as is referred to has sometimes appeared in such agreements, the object having been precisely that of avoiding recourse to Courts of law. How the ultimate decision is arrived at, and what advisers the Treasury would consult, depends on circumstances, and no general statement can be made as to the procedure adopted; but the parties are given every opportunity of making such representations as they wish to submit and, where necessary, are personally heard. It is hardly necessary to add that parties are not compelled to enter into such agreements with the Treasury; if they do so, they do so voluntarily and presumably for their own advantage.

New Scheme for Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state when the necessary arrangements will be made with the Civil Service Commissioners for bringing into full effect the new scheme for clerks to surveyors of taxes; is he aware that over two months have elapsed since the date of the Treasury Order; and, in view of the fact that pensions are only to be calculated from the date of actual establishment, will he expedite the arrangements so that full effect can be given to such scheme without further delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I beg to refer to my reply to the hon. Member on the 21st ultimo. Every effort is being made to expedite the arrangements.

Irish National Teachers—Supplementary Estimate.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say when the Supplementary Estimate for the increase of salaries of national teachers will be introduced, and the amount of the grant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Supplementary Estimate is before the Treasury and will be presented to the House at an early date. The amount is £114,000.

Promotion of School Teachers in County Down.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what reports are required for national school teachers to qualify for special promotion, and how many teachers in county Down have got special promotion within the past year; and whether he can state the number of applications received by the Commissioners within the current year for the enlargement of schools in the county Down portion of Circuit 9 of Section A., and the cause of the delay in giving effect to them.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that, as a rule. teachers have to remain at least three years on the maximum of their grade incomes before they are eligible for promotion; but when the cases of teachers of exceptional ability and merit come to the notice of the Commissioners and their officers, the Commissioners carefully consider such cases and examine the reports upon the schools for a series of years, together with the official records, of the teachers' careers. Each such case is then dealt with upon its merits, and the Commissioners award special promotion in those cases in which they consider it would be inequitable to enforce the usual practice. Ten teachers were specially promoted in county Down in 1907. The Commissioners have received during the current year two applications for the enlargement of school-houses in the district mentioned. In one of the cases the Commissioners are awaiting a reply from the manager as to his willingness to carry out the provisions of Rule 127 (b), and in the other case no grant is admissible under the Commissioners' rules, seeing that the school is non-vested.

Restoration of John M'Quade, Evicted Tenant.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have taken any action with regard to the restoration of Mr. John F. M'Quade to the holding from which he was formerly evicted in the townland of Drumkirk, on the Irvine estate, county Fermanagh; if the present tenant, who is a national school teacher, and who has offered to accept the compensation offered by the Estates Commissioners, lives over sixteen miles from the farm and uses it exclusively for grazing purposes; and, if so, will the Estates Commissioners take the necessary steps to have M'Quade reinstated into his former holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have placed this matter in the hands of an inspector with the view of ascertaining what steps can be taken for the restoration of the applicant.

Grogey (County Fermanagh) Election Arrangements.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that at the recent local government elections for the Grogey electoral division of the county of Fermanagh, held in Grogey national school, for the return of two rural district councillors, the provisions made by Mr. E. Hugh Archdale, the returning officer for the said county, were inadequate and unsatisfactory; if he has seen a letter by the Rev. J. Orr, M.A., an elector, complaining of the conduct of the returning officer; if the presiding officer at this election was an ex-sergeant of police at Enniskillen, named George Dobson, who in consequence of his connection with a case some eighteen months ago before the County Court Judge of Fermanagh was compelled to retire from the force; and will he ask the Irish Local Government Board to see that Mr. Archdale, if he should in future be returning officer, will make better provisions for doing his official work but appoint presiding officers of competence and experience.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have not received any complaint as to the inadequacy of the provision made by the returning officer, and have not seen the letter of the Rev. Mr. Orr referred to in the Question. The Board have been informed by the returning officer that it is not the fact that Mr. Dobson, who was employed by presiding officer, was compelled to retire from the police force. On the contrary, Mr. Dobson retired voluntarily upon the maximum pension and with an honourable record, and is known in private life as a respectable and trustworthy person. The Local Government Board do not exercise authority over returning officers, and, moreover, in the present case they are not aware of any reason why they should interfere, even if they had power to do so.

Deduction of Interest from Payment to Mr. Robert Pearson.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, seeing that the full amount of capital was deducted from the amount of cash received in 1906 by Mr. Robert Pearson, of Clonmore, Errill, Ballybrophy, Queen's County, from the Estates Commissioners for the purchase of the property known as Ballyquaide Glebe, Queen's County, by such amount of capital being paid in instalments, and not fully due until 1927 to the Land Commission Court, he will recommend, by way of compensation to Mr. Pearson, a sum equivalent to the amount of interest kept back from him at the time of purchase, and which should not be paid in full till 1927.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say by what authority has a large amount of cash as interest been deducted from the amount received by Mr. Robert Pearson, of Clonmore, Errill, Ballybrophy, Queen's County from the Estates Commissioners at the conclusion of the sale in 1906 of the property known as Ballyquaide Glebe, Ballybrophy, such sum as interest not being due to the Land Commission Court till 1927.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that the facts of this case are as follows:—Mr. Robert

Pearson purchased the property referred to in the Questions from the Church Temporalities Commissioners in the year 1878, subject to a mortgage to those Commissioners for £478 14s. 5d., repayable by forty instalments of £17 10s. each. That mortgage was revised pursuant to the 25th Section of the Land Law Act, 1887, and the amount then outstanding, together with the arrears of instalments then due, was made repayable by ninety-eight instalments of £7 3s. each, including interest at the rate of 3⅛ per cent. The decade provisions of the 25th Section of the Land Law Act of 1896 were applied to this mortgage under the 25th Section of that Act. and, on the 1st January, 1898, the amount due on the mortgage then outstanding as ascertained under the decade system was £273 1s., repayable by half-yearly instalments of £5 9s. 3d On the sale of the property by Mr. Pearson to the occupying tenants in 1906 the cash value of the outstanding annuity, calculated on the tables applicable to such cases, was £250 13s. 3d., and this amount, together with £10 18s. 6d. arrears of annuity then due, was paid to the Land Commission for the Church Property Account on the 26th June, 1906. Mr. Pearson, therefore, has received the full sum to which he was entitled, and cannot be awarded compensation.

Royal Irish Constabulary.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Bill which he has promised to better the condition of the Royal Irish Constabulary, will be introduced before the House rises.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Yes, Sir. The Bill will involve a Financial Resolution, and I shall have an opportunity, when moving the Resolution, of stating the purport of the measure. I hope to move in the matter very shortly.

Erection of School at Tullywhisher.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the fact that the National Commissioners of Education ordered a school to be built in Tullywhisher, county Tyrone, in the year 1903, and the locality having purchased a site and collected one-third of the cost of building, he can say why the school has not been erected.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education have now sanctioned the erection of a schoolhouse at this place upon the usual conditions, and negotiations are proceeding with reference to the lease of the site. The matter was under consideration in 1905, and the Commissioners were then prepared to make a building grant; but, in consequence of the general suspension of building grants pending a settlement of the whole question, the case was not then proceeded with.

Application for Labourers Cottages at Hillsborough.

Mr. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that applications for the erection of labourers' cottages in the district of Hillsborough have been awaiting settlement between four and five years; and whether, seeing that no steps have yet been taken in the matter of these applications, he will make inquiry as to the cause of the delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Hillsborough Rural District Council have recently submitted a scheme under the Labourers Acts for the erection of fifty-nine cottages with half-acre allotments, and the Local Government Board have arranged to hold the necessary inquiry on 1st July.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A: Mr. Joyce and Mr. Waldron (in respect of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) (Repeal Bill), and Captain Donelan, Mr. Hayden, and Mr. Harrington; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) (Repeal Bill): Mr. Patrick White, Mr. Charles MacVeigh, Mr. Halpin, Mr. Farrell, and Mr. Ffrench.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham), in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that before the Committee passed the clause he had one or two questions to put. The clause empowered the Government to acquire certain lands for the extension of public offices. When the Bill was read a second time there was considerable discussion as to whether all the lands needed had been acquired. The sum of £600,000 had been appropriated from the Sinking Fund for the purposes of the Bill, but that was a separate matter into which he would not go at that moment. No doubt his hon. friend the Member for Norwood, who was following in the steps of his father in his care of the finances of the nation, would have something to say as to the manner in which land for the purposes of the Bill was to be acquired. What he wanted to know was whether the whole of the land necessary for the completion of the new public buildings in the neighbourhood of the House had been acquired. He thought they ought to know whether those raids on the Sinking Fund were going to be stopped. Of course it was an easy way of paying for land, and it might be continued indefinitely, so that they would have next session, and the session after that, proposals to complete the acquisition of land in the same manner. In such circumstances the present Bill would be pointed to as a precedent, and, therefore, it was necessary to raise objection now. He believed that a new building which was erected five or six years ago, or at all events, a comparatively short time ago, at a cost of £40,000, was to be acquired and pulled down. That seemed to him to be an extremely odd proceeding. Personally, he would like to see London made beautiful, but at as little cost as possible. If this new building was to be acquired, he did not see the necessity of doing anything more than adapt it to the requirements of some of the offices in need of accommodation. The building was a very fine one, with a beautiful facade, erected by the Civil Engineers, and it seemed to him that it would be easy to adapt it to all reasonable purposes. Certainly the building was far and away superior to many of the buildings which were used for public departments at the present time. He wished also to ascertain the meaning of subsection (2), which applied to land in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. Would it be necessary to pass another Bill to acquire that land or did the subsection give the Office of Works power to take more money from the Sinking Fund without coming to the House of Commons?

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale) said that subsection (2) of Clause 1 referred to land in the Parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. It was land situate in Scotland Yard, and was to be used as a recruiting station. The recruiting station was to be removed from its present place behind the National Gallery, in order to provide accommodation for the national collections on that site, and to secure the existing buildings against the danger of fire. The whole of the land in Scotland Yard had been long in the possession of the Woods and Forests Department, and no new funds would be required to acquire space for the new recruiting station.

SIR F. BANBURY: Has the land already been acquired?

*MR. HARCOURT said the land had been in the possession of the Woods and Forests Department for many years, and money for the erection of the recruiting station had been taken in the Votes already passed by Parliament, and, therefore, it did not form part of this Bill. The whole of the land required in Westminster for the extension of the public offices could be and would be acquired under this Bill. No further Acts of any sort would be necessary. The hon. Baronet had remarked truly that the buildings on the land would also be acquired.

SIR F. BANBURY: All the land has been acquired?

*Mr. HARCOURT: No; not all of it; a very large portion of it had been acquired, and this Bill gave compulsory powers for the acquisition of the lands. As to the building of the Civil Engineers, it was essential that it should be removed in order to complete Mr. Bryden's scheme for buildings down to St. James's Park. A pledge had been given by the Government of which the hon. Baronet was a supporter that Mr. Bryden's plan should be carried out in its entirety, and a Consultative Committee was appointed for the purpose of seeing that that was done. It was, therefore, necessary, now that provision was being made for the completion of the plan, to remove the building of the Civil Engineers. He entirely agreed with what the hon. Baronet had said as to the beauty of its façade, and he could only regret that at the time it was being erected, a previous Government had not sufficient foresight to warn the Civil Engineers that they had better not spend money on the site, because it would be required for public offices. He hoped that the Bill would now be passed as it had been carefully considered by a Committee upstairs.

Sir F. BANBURY said that though the Bill was to go to a Committee upstairs, that was no reason why they should not discuss it in the House. Was he to understand that the Government of which the right hon. Gentleman was a prominent Member, always carried out the policy of the preceding Conservative Government? If that was so, it was a new line altogether. But it seemed to him that when the Government approved of something which had been begun by their predecessors, they were in favour of continuity of policy, but if it was something which they did not approve, then they refused to recognise continuity of policy. The right hon. Gentleman had remarked that owing to want of foresight, the Conservative Government had permitted something to be done, yet he was going to fulfil at great expense the pledge which had been given. They were spending a great deal of money at the present time. They had to find money for old-age pensions, and a variety of other objects, and he thought that they should economise at any rate in some direction. His hon. friend below him was a Member of the late Government, and perhaps he would state whether it was necessary to pull down the Civil Engineers' building. If he did not say so, then he should, perhaps, consider it necessary to go to a division. It might be that had the country five or six years ago been in its present financial condition, the late Government would not have recommended this expenditure. It was because he believed that the present finances of the country did not permit of extravagance that he felt inclined, unless his hon. friend below him suggested otherwise, to go to a division.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said the Bill was one which the House ought really to consider a little before passing it. Its object was to carry out a policy for enormously increasing the number of public buildings in the neighbourhood of the House, and which, if they were not careful, would in time overshadow its surroundings. The measure provided for an enormous expenditure in the most wasteful way. They were multiplying marble palaces for innumerable junior clerks. He objected to the junior clerk being ensconced in marble palaces, and in his opinion the larger, the more beautiful and the more expensive the public offices became the less work was done in them. For his own part he thought that the House ought very seriously to pause before giving the right hon. Gentleman the great powers contained in this Bill. He thought that the right hon. Gentleman ought to tell them what was the overwhelming necessity for these fine new palaces all round the House. Was the bureaucracy——

*The CHAIRMAN: Order, order. The hon. Member is making a Second Reading speech. The Second Reading has been carried and we are now in the Committee Stage. This clause authorises the Commissioners to buy certain lands. The hon. Member's remarks do not seem to me to be relevant.

Mr. BOWLES said he would observe the Chairman's ruling. The clause empowered the Commissioners to acquire large tracts of land for the purpose of erecting buildings on them, and he wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he had formed any estimate of what the cost of these works would be under the Bill. Did the Commissioners propose to proceed by way of loan? They knew that as regarded the £600,000 they did propose to proceed by way of loan, which he considered to be an extremely mischievous course. He did not know whether the Committee realised that this Government, which was always explaining that it was giving up the system of deferred expenses, while it was solemnly proposing to take £600,000——

*The CHAIRMAN: This discussion on the finance of the Bill is not in order on this clause as far as I can see. The question of the £600,000 has nothing at all to do with the matter.

Mr. BOWLES asked on which clause it would be in order to discuss the question of finance.

*The CHAIRMAN: Clause 11 appears to be the clause on which to raise a financial discussion.

Mr. BOWLES asked whether it was not competent for him to inquire what would be the cost of acquiring the lands under this clause.

*The CHAIRMAN: Certainly, the lands contained in the clause.

Mr. BOWLES said he desired with great respect to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any estimate had been formed, or what the estimate was as to the cost of the operations under this clause.

Mr. HARCOURT said he had explained the whole matter on the Second Reading. The purchase of the land and buildings was already provided for by the late Government under the Public Offices Loans Act. The estimated cost of the buildings to be erected on the site under this Bill was in round figures £600,000 which was provided out of the realised surplus of last year, but under the Finance Act.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) hoped his hon. friend would not divide against the clause because the point which had been raised was really a point of detail that had been specifically provided for in Clause 8, and he suggested that the question should be raised on the subsequent clause rather than the whole scheme divided against.

Sir F. BANBURY said he would be pleased to fall in with the suggestion of his hon. friend, but he wished to ask a question on another matter. It was proposed to pull down all the houses and buildings in Prince's Street with the exception of a public-house at the corner. He wished to know why this Government as advocates of temperance did not pull down that public-house when they had an opportunity. His hon. friend said they wanted to get it cheaper under the new Act, but he did not believe such a motive would actuate hon. Gentlemen opposite, and if it did their supporters would have something to say about it. He would like to hear what hon. Members opposite had to say about it.

*Mr. HARCOURT said he had not as full a detailed knowledge of the accommodation for travellers in Prince's Street as that possessed by the hon. Baronet, but as the house referred to was in the neighbourhood of his own office, he could tell him the reason it was not interfered with was that they were not acquiring the land on that side of the street.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2:

Sir F. BANBURY said he would like some explanation of this clause.

*Mr. HARCOURT said it was the common clause in all cases where land was acquired by arbitration. Where an offer had been made and the award of the arbitrators was subsequently of no greater amount than the offer which had been tendered, the cost of the arbitration should fall upon the vendor who had declined the offer.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) asked if that was not provided by Statute. Why was it necessary to make special provision?

*Mr. HARCOURT said it was provided for in the Lands Clauses Act, but this was only in the case where the vendor had omitted to make a statement of his claim in sufficient time for the offer to be made.

Clause 2 agreed to.

Clause 3:

Sir F. BANBURY said that this was a very important clause, because it gave the Government power to close rights of way, which he thought ought not to be done without very strong and sufficient reason. Was it necessary that these thoroughfares should be shut up? Subsection (2) gave further powers to the Commissioners to stop up a path to Prince's Mews under certain conditions, but not unless they required the land for houses on both sides of the thoroughfare. If the thoroughfare was not detrimental to use on one side why was it detrimental to use on both sides? That was rather an exceptional power to give the Government and one that they ought to be very careful about allowing any Government to avail themselves of, especially when, there being a good deal of congestion of traffic, it was advisable that there should be as many different routes leading to the same point. It should be remembered too that during the last ten or fifteen years many bars and gates in private thoroughfares had been taken away at desire of hon. Members opposite. He hoped they would have a satisfactory explanation on the subject.

Mr. HARCOURT said Prince's Mews could not be regarded as a traffic thoroughfare at present. What they proposed to do was to make a new access to the Mews which would be more convenient to all concerned, and unless they were in absolute possession of the whole property it would not be entirely stopped except by agreement with the neighbouring landowners. There was a nominal right of way in Old Scotland Yard, but it was only a right of way round the existing police buildings which would be pulled down and covered with a new recruiting station, and they proposed in exchange to make a wide, new, very useful thoroughfare through Old Scotland Yard leading down to the Embankment. There was another right of way in Delahay Street which would be built over completely by the new buildings. It would be of no possible advantage to the public to leave a mere passage way through a block of public buildings, but in return for that they widened Charles Street the whole way down and Great George Street the whole of the rest of the way from the Engineers' Institute down to the Park. It was a matter for the local authorities as to whether they would prefer to have a wider road with the pavement at its present width or have a wider pavement.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, 6, and 7 added to the Bill.

Clause 8:

Sir F. BANBURY said this was the clause relating to the new buildings of the Institution of Civil Engineers. He wished to know what site was going to be provided, what was the area of the site, and the cost. He understood that the Civil Engineers were to be given £40,000 for the purpose of erecting a new building on a site to be given by the Government. He wanted to know what the value of the site to be given was, and whether it was correct that the area of the site to be given was larger than the one the Government had taken over. If that was the case he failed to see why the Civil Engineers should be given a larger area in addition to a sum of £40,000. He did not wish anything to be done which might be considered parsimonious to the Civil Engineers, who had been turned out of their own building, but he would like to know where the new site was. Sites were very valuable in that locality, and if the Civil Engineers got a site for nothing they ought to pay for the difference in size if they got a larger area.

*Mr. HARCOURT said the new site for the Institution of Civil Engineers was on the other side of Great George Street, at the corner of Prince's Street. Arrangements would be made by the Government to widen Prince's Street at that point for the convenience of the public. It was quite true that the Civil Engineers would receive about £40,000, but the hon. Baronet was mistaken in thinking they had made a bad bargain. The Government bought at so much per foot, and they gave the Civil Engineers another site on a larger area, but the Engineers paid for that site exactly the same price per foot for the whole area as the Government were paying per foot for the area surrendered.

Clause agreed to.

Remaining Clauses agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment; read the third time, and passed.

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

Considered in Committee.

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1:

SIR F. BANBURY moved an Amendment to insert in line 6, after the word "Board" the words "and of the owners and ratepayers of their district expressed by Resolution passed in manner provided by the Third Schedule of the Public Health Act, 1875." On the face of it all that Clause 1 appeared to do was to allow rural district councils to exercise certain powers with the consent of the Local Government Board, but that was not really so. The object of the Bill was to give two or three small towns power to provide markets, but he did not think those powers should be exercised unless the consent of the owners and ratepayers of the district was first obtained. Surely there was no reason why the owners and ratepayers should not possess the power of saying whether or not they approved of the expenditure of money upon these markets. He did not know why there should be any objection to inserting those words. In a matter of this sort it was necessary that the owners and ratepayers should be able to decide whether or not their money should be spent upon markets. Unless some provision of the kind he suggested were made it might be possible for one or two small owners who had an axe to grind to start a market at the public expense. They might go to the Local Government Board and succeed in blinding the eyes of the officials there, and the provision of a market might be got through in that way without the consent of the owners or ratepayers and against their wishes. The Local Government Board might give powers which might be used in such a way as to diminish the value of property of certain people in the district, and the rates might be increased against the wishes of the ratepayers. Those who had to pay the piper had a right to call the tune. Therefore, he thought it was absolutely necessary to insert the words he suggested and he begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 6, after the word 'Board,' to insert the words 'and of the owners and ratepayers of their district expressed by Resolution passed in manner provided by the Third Schedule of the Public Health Act. 1875.' "—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.) said the point raised by the hon. Baronet was also raised on the Second Reading of the Bill. Although the sum involved in carrying out the hon. Baronet's proposal, if it were adopted, was not large, he would like to point out that the establishment of this method of control would prove quite impracticable in the rural districts. The hon. Baronet proposed that the opinion of the owners and ratepayers should be expressed by resolution passed in manner provided by the third schedule of the Public Health Act, 1875. That applied only to urban district councils, but the hon. Baronet, who had no doubt studied the operation of the schedule, would agree with him that it was a very cumbrous, complicated, and costly method of carrying out the purpose in view. The provision with respect to the holding of a public meeting and taking a poll had fallen into disuse in connection with the Act, and he did not suppose that any party now in providing for finding out the opinion of the ratepayers would provide exactly such a method as that. The difficulty which was felt in the urban districts was one which would be still more felt in the country and rural districts. The gathering together of ratepayers scattered over a wide area, and the carrying out of a poll in the event of the vote of the meeting being contested, would, he thought, be almost impracticable. It would have to be done by some different method, and the criticism which he had to make was that some modification of the Amendment would be required, owing to the different conditions in the rural districts from those in the urban districts in connection with markets. In the cases where difficulty had arisen—two of them had been mentioned—the desire was to get a market for a particular parish or combination of parishes, and it would be rather absurd, he thought, to obtain the opinion of the whole of a rural district in regard to a proposal for the provision of a market in which the majority of the population of the rural district would probably have no interest at all. They might not even have a financial interest in the proposal, because a special rate might be levied on the area concerned with the market. In the case of the parish which had been mentioned as having given birth to this Bill, the population who desired a market was something like 2,000, while the population of the whole district was 14,000, so that 12,000 would be utterly unconcerned in the provision of the market. The point raised had been considered by the Government, and they thought that the provision in the Bill was sufficient for the protection of the ratepayers. The Bill was introduced largely for sanitary reasons. More demands were being made in connection with the markets on account of the regulations issued as to the diseases of animals by the Board of Agriculture. It was a demand which was likely to grow in future. In many respects, therefore, this demand came under the general establishment of sanitary conditions in rural districts. It was curious to find the hon. Baronet stating that the Local Government Board would be too lax in this matter, because the accusation made against the Board was more often that it was too much inclined to control those districts, and to prevent them from doing what they wanted to do. He did not quite agree with the hon. Baronet that the Board would have nothing to do with the spending of money. When an application for a loan came from a rural district council to the Local Government Board, the ratepayers would be represented at a public inquiry, witnesses would be heard, and the sanction of the central authority to provide a market would be required. He submitted that the method followed in other analogous cases ought to be sufficient in this case.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) said he understood that a rural district council was to obtain power not only to enlarge and improve existing markets, but to spend any amount of money in providing new markets.

MR. MASTERMAN said that a rural district council would be able to take over existing markets from their present owners, and to enlarge markets subject to the limitations provided for by an Act which was incorporated in the Public Health Act of 1875, namely, the Markets and Fairs Act of 1847.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD said the powers of the rural districts councils were to be increased, and he strongly objected to that. There were many small ratepayers in the rural districts who were already overburdened with rates. As the representative of a constituency which was mainly rural he received from day to day complaints in regard to the increase in the rates, and, while he had not the smallest wish to obstruct this Bill he must say that he regarded with alarm the prospect of a further increase in the rates in respect of markets. There were markets in small towns which were considered quite satisfactory according to old-fashioned ideas of sanitation, but they were objected to from time to time by the higher authorities. An inspector might come down and say that such and such sanitary arrangements which had been ordered by his predecessor were now unsuitable, and the locality might be put to great expense in altering arrangements which had been approved a few months, or, it might be, a year before. He did not like the proposal to empower rural district councils to spend large sums of money in this way, and thereby increase the rates which were already pressing very heavily upon the ratepayers.

*THE CHAIRMAN said the right hon. Member's remarks would be more appropriate to another clause in the Bill. They were not relevant to the Amendment now before the Committee.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said that this question of markets was rather important. There was no question that affected the interests of agriculture more than that of markets. Unfortunately, during the last ten years there had been great difficulty in keeping up existing markets, and anything which dealt with their administration was of some importance. He thought the Parliamentary Secretary in his speech made one fundamental error, if he might say so, in supposing that a market would not affect a rural district council as a whole.

MR. MASTERMAN: I said it might not.

EARL WINTERTON thought the hon. Gentleman went further than that. So far from a market only affecting a part of a rural district, he thought exactly the contrary would be the case. It was probable that a market would affect more than one rural district council; certainly the area of a rural district council was smaller than the area affected by a market. Therefore, he did not think that his objection that the ratepayers and voters in the area of a rural district council would not feel sufficient interest in the question of the formation of a market to be at the trouble and inconvenience of passing a Resolution on the subject really held good. It was eminently a question which would affect the whole of the voters and ratepayers in a rural district council area. The hon. Gentleman had also said that the proposed method of ascertaining the views of the ratepayers and voters in the rural district area was out of date, that it had scarcely ever been put into operation, and that if Parliament were to-day asked to legislate afresh, it would be very unlikely to adopt a similar procedure. That might be so, but the fact remained that it was the only method of ascertaining the views of the ratepayers in an area, and he quite agreed with his right hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Epping Division that in these matters it was important that they should guard the interests of the ratepayers in a rural district. The Parliamentary Secretary had not, perhaps, a very wide acquaintance with conditions prevailing in rural districts, and was not aware how large a sum of money could be spent on the upkeep of and in connection with a market. He thought it was of the greatest importance that the voters in a rural district should have a voice with regard to their market. He would, therefore, certainly support the Amendment—unless the Parliamentary Secretary could suggest some other means by which the interests of the ratepayers and the promoters could be guarded. He had not yet done so; in fact in many respects his speech was in support of his hon. friend.

SIR F. BANBURY thought there was something in the criticism of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board as to the effect of the Amendment being to give power to the inhabitants of rural districts to vote on proposals with respect to markets which concerned only particular parishes. He, therefore, proposed to amend his Amendment by leaving out the words "their district" and inserting "a parish.

*THE CHAIRMAN: May I suggest to the hon. Baronet that he should withdraw this Amendment, and move another instead of amending this.

SIR F. BANBURY asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

SIR F. BANBURY moved the Amendment as altered to meet the criticism of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board. No danger to health arose because there was a market there. The farmers came in every week and spent the whole day there—sometimes longer than was necessary; and it was quite a mistake to suppose that there was any real danger from insanitation. Of course it would be more convenient and easier for the scavengers to clean the market place after the market was over if it was paved; but that was all that was necessary to be done. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would accept his Amendment and if it was found to be unworkable it could be corrected on the Report stage.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 6, after the word 'Board' to insert the words 'and of the owners and ratepayers of a parish expressed by resolution passed in manner provided by the Third Schedule of the Public Health Act, 1875.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*MR. MASTERMAN said he could not see that the hon. Baronet had improved the Amendment by his new Amendment. Every part of the rural district might be interested in the sanitation of the market and not only the parish.

SIR F. BANBURY said that it was the rural district which was to find the money while the parish alone would get the benefit. The parish might contain a population of only a thousand while the rural district might have a population of ten thousand or more.

*MR. MASTERMAN said that the principal Act said that the rate might be either a general rate or a special rate for one parish or a combination of parishes. To limit the use of the market to one parish would be a mistake. As to the general question, he quite agreed with the hon. Baronet when he said that the very large question of sanitation and public health was introduced by this clause. It had been introduced by the Local Government Board at the suggestion of the Board of Agriculture, and there was no necessity for local option. If it would meet the wishes of the hon. Baronet he would consent to insert, what indeed was implied in the Bill, after the words "Local Government Board" the words "after local inquiry." The Local Government Board would in general, he should imagine, hold a local inquiry.

*MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said he did not think the so-called concession was worth taking at all. He thought that the regulations laid down by the Local Government Board in regard to the sanitary arrangements of local markets were sufficient. In his own town the cattle and sheep and other stock were brought into the market-place between nine and ten in the morning and stayed there till three o'clock, when the market was closed. There was no paving; only the ordinary drains. There was not the slightest nuisance, and everything went on well, as it had done for the last 200 or 300 years. Really something should be done to put a stop to this expenditure of public money. The Parliamentary Secretary said that this Bill had been drawn up on the same lines as Bills with reference to drainage and water supply. But these local markets were on quite a different plane. This was a Bill which would enable the rural district council to do certain things which might possibly be of great benefit to them or their friends. The hon. Baronet said that it might depreciate some property, but it might also improve other property if a fair were held once a week, say, opposite a licensed house. What objection could the Parliamentary Secretary have to the Amendment which only provided that no expense ought to be put on the locality unless the ratepayers agreed to it? He could not conceive how the Government, which, in theory, were always so wishful to trust the people, should not accept the Amendment. The Agricultural Holdings Act did not trust the people as they expected; and could not the Government do something to redeem their election promises?

MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted; and, forty Members being found present—

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said that the Amendment as it stood would not do, as it was quite plain that a parish would not necessarily be coterminous with the rural district where the market was established. With the machinery of this clause, as it stood, he thought there would be great difficulty in doing what his hon friend wanted; but he asked what would be the effect of this provision, as it stood, unless some such Amendment was introduced. The provision was that—

> "A rural district council may, with the consent of the Local Government Board, exercise with respect to the provision or regulation of markets any powers which an urban ditrict council may exercise with the consent of owners and ratepayers, under Section 166 of the Public Health Act, 1875, and Sections 167 and 168 of that Act shall apply with respect to those powers by a rural district council as they apply with respect to the exercise of those powers by any urban district council."

That was to say, they gave to a rural district council the powers possessed by an urban district council under Section 166 of the Public Health Act. But the powers possessed by the urban district council were powers subject to a poll, and, therefore, they gave to the rural district council powers which were subject to a poll. It was a matter of extreme doubt whether the effect of the drafting of the clause would be to carry out the wishes of the Government. This was one of the difficulties of legislation by reference. The right thing would have been to have enacted exactly what the Government wanted. He was afraid that the clause as at present drawn would cause trouble in the future.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said the hon. Baronet might allow the clause to go after what had been stated the other day with regard to legislating by reference.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 23; Noes, 125. (Division List No. 124.)

AYES.

Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E)
Cheetham, John Frederick
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Guinness, Walter Edward
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Stanier, Beville
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Staveley-Hill.

NOES

Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H. (St. Pancras, N
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W.E. (Derbyshire, N.E
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Higham, John Sharp
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lever, W.H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lundon, W.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael

Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Clause 1 stand part of the Bill."

*MR. ASHLEY said that after the interesting speech of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone, in which he pointed out that the rural district council under this clause had the same powers as urban district councils, he thought it was unreasonable to ask the Committee to pass this clause without having the Law Officers present to lay down authoritatively what this clause really meant. The hon. Gentleman in charge of the measure laid it down that no poll was necessary; the noble Lord laid it down that it was necessary. What was the position of an ordinary man when a member of the Government laid down one interpretation and the noble Lord, a legal luminary, laid down another? He submitted that it was unreasonable to expect the House to come to a decision upon the question without some guidance from the Law Officers. If the noble Lord was right in his contention, there could be no objection to this clause, but if the hon. Gentleman was right he should protest most strongly against its being passed. In order to obtain an authoritative statement on the question, he begged to move the rejection of the clause.

MR. YOUNGER said that it seemed perfectly clear on reading Section 166 of the Public Health Act that an expression of opinion must be obtained in the usual way by a poll of the ratepayers. He thought the objection of his hon. friend would be met by that as there would be this opportunity for the ratepayers to object to anything which they did not wish to pay.

MR. MASTERMAN said the hon. Member who opposed the clause seemed to think it would give exactly what he voted for at the present time. He confessed that he found it a little difficult to find out the exact point of the noble Lord. As he read the Bill it was about as simple as any Bill could be. Surely there was no legal ambiguity about this clause. He submitted that they might proceed to pass the clause as it stood. There was one point which the noble Lord made. He seemed to think that this Bill gave privileges to the rural district councils which were not given to the urban district councils or to borough councils. That was not so. The Government were putting in the Local Government Board as a safeguard to the ratepayers in the rural districts; the urban districts and the boroughs could establish these markets without coming to the superior authority. The rural councils were forbidden to do that.

MR. STAVELEY-HILL said he did not understand his noble friend to say there was any particular ambiguity in the wording of this Bill except so far as it was caused by the reference to the Act of 1875. They asked whether the hon. Gentleman's statement that there was to be no poll was right, or whether they were to think what the reading of the Act of Parliament entitled them to think, viz., that there was to be a poll, if the provisions of the Act were to be complied with. It showed the unnecessary amount of time taken up in consequence of the absence of the Law Officers of the Crown, because if they had been present the clause could have been explained at once by them. He thought the Government had got themselves to blame when time was taken up in discussing a measure of this sort, the clauses of which they were unable to explain.

SIR F. BANBURY said he quite agreed with his friends, and when he first read this clause he thought a poll would have to be taken. The words said that a rural district council might, with the consent of the Local Government Board, exercise with respect to the provision or regulation of markets any powers which an urban district council might exercise with the consent of owners and ratepayers under Section 166 of the Public Health Act, 1875. He had referred to that Act, and he found it there laid down that an urban district council could establish markets provided they obtained the consent of the owners and ratepayers. It seemed to him that the meaning of these words was that the rural district council might exercise the powers of an urban district council, but that before they could do so they would have to obtain the consent of the Local Government Board and of the owners and ratepayers. But knowing the difficulty of understanding a Bill which was full of all sorts of references to previous Acts, when the Second Reading came on he raised that point and was informed by the President of the Local Government Board, whose absence that day they all deplored, that, as a matter of fact, all that would be required would be the consent of the Local Government Board. He presumed the right hon. Gentleman understood his own Bill, but he was not quite certain that the Parliamentary Secretary did. His explanation was not at all to the point. He (Sir F. Banbury) defied anyone in the House, whether a lawyer or not, to say that the words he first read out could mean anything more than that the consent of the ratepayers was required. However, he presumed the right hon. Gentleman was correct and that the two remaining sections mentioned in the clause did alter the first part of it. Under those circumstances he should vote with his hon. friend, because the House of Commons ought not to be put in the position of having no Law Officer present. It was not a very big or important matter to the nation, but it was important to the ratepayers of a district. An increase in the rates of a little parish was very much more important to that small parish than an increase in a big town like London. Therefore, they ought to have the presence of the Law Officers who were paid to be in attendance at the House. He did not know whether it was owing to the enormous number of Bills the Government had introduced, but over and over again the Law Officers had been absent from their places and had had to be sent for, and when one of them arrived it usually happened that he was a Scottish Law Officer if the House was discussing an English Bill, or an English officer if they were dealing with a Scottish Bill; whether that was arranged between them or not he could not say. The Parliamentary Secretary had truly said that when the Bill was read a second time he objected to it on the ground that it was more or less unnecessary. It gave powers to a rural district council to spend a considerable sum of money on markets in small places, the original idea being that there were small places in which the markets were not in a good condition and in which they had no power to improve them. But the Bill went further than that, and gave power to a rural district council, not only to repair a market and put it into a proper sanitary condition, but actually to establish a market and levy rates and dues. That was a large question, and the original justification of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Bill that it was necessary for the purposes of sanitation and public health rather conveyed to the House that this was a small matter. The Bill, however, allowed large sums of money to be spent on the making of markets and the levying of rates and tolls, and there was no limit to the rates; any sum of money might be spent by the rural district councils. The Parliamentary Secretary had said that the council might apply their powers to any one part of an area for which that parish might pay, whereas the market could be used for the whole of the district, but he had qualified that by saying that the Local Government Board might order a rate to be levied over the whole of the rural district. But it might happen that a market paid for by the whole of the rural district would also be used by a portion of a neighbouring county. It often happened that a town was on the borders of a county, and that, therefore, its market would be used by the people of both counties. He did not think that argument could be controverted. Under those circumstances, and bearing in mind that at the present time the rates were pressing very heavily on the rural districts, and also that for some unknown reason the local authorities were very often very extravagant, he thought it was absolutely necessary that they should oppose this sort of thing. He had, therefore, very great pleasure in supporting his hon. friend, who had very great experience in these matters.

MR. MASTERMAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 142; Noes, 23. (Division List No. 125.)

AYES.

Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd)
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)

Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

NOES.

Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James(Down, E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Pease, Herbert Pike(Darlington
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Stanier, Beville
Staveley-Hill, Henry(Staff'sh
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Ashley and Mr. Younger

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

The House divided:—Ayes, 153; Noes, 20. (Division List No. 126.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Berridge, T. H. D.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow
Corbett, CH(Sussex, E. Grinst'd)
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gulland, John W.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.

Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

NOES.

Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Stanier, Beville
Saveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Bowles and Earl Winterton.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

SIR F. BANBURY said that during the whole of the sitting they had been discussing Bills which proposed legislation by reference, without having the advantage of the presence of any Law Officer of the Crown. They had now come to an extremely important Bill full of legislation by reference, and they were still without the advantage of the presence of the Law Officers. He thought his right hon. friend the late Home Secretary would bear him out in saying that before they began to discuss an important Bill of this sort they ought at least to have a Law Officer present. He defied anybody who was not thoroughly conversant with the subject to know what on earth Clause 1 was all about. He therefore begged to report progress.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: It is very unusual to move to report progress when the Minister in charge is present, simply because the Law Officers of the Crown are not here.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would point out that this Bill involved legal questions of which the Financial Secretary to the Treasury could have no knowledge. It was really most important that they should be able to have the position explained to them by the Law Officers of the Crown. He moved to report progress, because there was a strong feeling on that side of the House that some attention should be called to the matter.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report progress and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

EARL WINTERTON supported the appeal for the presence of the Law Officers. He and his friends had no hostility to the Bill, and many of them were anxious to see it passed. There were, however, several questions which really could not be debated without the assistance of the Law Officers. There was, for instance, to be proposed by himself, an Amendment of some importance raising an intricate point of law. Under these circumstances he hoped the hon. Gentleman would give an undertaking that the Law Officers would be present immediately. Perhaps in that case his hon. friend would withdraw his Amendment. Unless the hon. Gentleman was able to give them that assurance he hoped his hon. friend would proceed to a division. This, unfortunately, was not the first time they had had to protest against the absence of the Law Officers of the Crown. They should certainly be present during the discussion of an important Bill of this kind. Everybody knew that the law with regard to friendly societies was most involved and intricate, and this Bill raised many important points on which it was absolutely essential they should have the assistance of the Law Officers.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's) said he was surprised the hon. Gentleman had not risen to reply. On the last Bill they had a Minister in charge who was perfectly capable of explaining the whole of the clauses, but here they had a Bill which was essentially technical and which referred to various statutes, and he thought it was only reasonable when in Committee on a Bill with a legal bearing that they should ask for the attendance of one of the Law Officers of the Crown. Many years ago the Law Officers were allowed to continue in private practice; and one of the reasons they were asked to give up their private practice was that, seeing they were paid large salaries, they might take the opportunity of being present in the House and explain to Members points which arose. If the hon. Gentleman had sent for the Law Officers, no doubt his hon. friend would be perfectly prepared to go on with the Bill until one of them arrived. He thought the hon. Baronet had made a reasonable and courteous request, and the Secretary to the Treasury had not even thought it worth while to reply.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said he had been a Member of the House for a good many years, but he had never before heard a Motion to report progress made at the beginning of a Bill or until some difficulty had arisen because of the absence of the Law Officers of the Crown. It seemed to him an unreasonable course to adopt; and he thought they ought to pursue the usual course and proceed with the discussion. If a difficulty arose, then some such proposition might be considered. The first clause was a perfectly simple one, presenting no legal difficulty of any sort or kind, and he therefore thought they might very well proceed with the discussion.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS said he had no objection to that course and to the Motion not being pressed, provided they understood that if difficulties arose a Law Officer would be present to explain them. He had been perhaps a larger number of years in the House than the hon. Gentleman opposite, and had never known such a request refused.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill had stated that he had never heard of such a request having been made at such an early stage in a Bill. He did not think the hon. Gentleman was in the House during the discussion on the preceding Bill.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I beg the hon. Baronet's pardon. I was present.

SIR F. BANBURY said that that made it all the worse, because he must be aware that a very serious legal point was raised by his noble friend the hon. Member for Marylebone, than whom there was no better critic of the law, and they had asked that they should have the opinion of a Law Officer. He did not wish to charge the hon. Gentleman with discourtesy, but he could not get the Law Officer of the Crown because he was nowhere within reach. Therefore he had passed over the question altogether. He believed the reason he was not produced when they asked for him was that he was not in the building. If that was so, what was the use of proceeding with the Bill? They wanted to ascertain whether a Law Officer could be obtained. It was for that reason, and because they had already stretched their forbearance almost to the point of breaking, that he moved to report progress; and it was, he thought, an extremely proper Motion to make. He would be the last man in the House to move a Motion which he did not think was in accordance with the rules and customs of the House. He desired to maintain them in all their integrity, and he was perfectly justified, in view of what had happened during the previous discussion, in moving to report progress.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 25; Noes, 154. (Division List No. 127.)

AYES.

Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Guinness, Walter Edward
Hamilton, Marquess of
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Morpeth, Viscount
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Stanier, Beville
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Staveley-Hill.

NOES

Acland, Francis Dyke
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, CH (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cox, Harold
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Esslemont, George Birnie
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Gill, A. H.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Lundon, W.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Meagher, Michael
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morse, L. L.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

Clause 1:

MR. STAVELEY-HILL asked for an explanation of what the language of the clause really meant, because here again they were met by legislation by reference, and he could not quite make out himself, in referring to Section 8 of the principal Act of 1896, what exactly was meant by the provision in the Bill.

MR. HOBHOUSE said the explanation of the first clause was really very simple. At present if a friendly society desired to establish a collateral branch of its activities for the purpose of insuring and guaranteeing the performance of their duties by officers and servants of the society, it had to establish what was called a specially authorised society. The intention of the clause was to enable a society not to go to the expense and trouble of establishing a specially authorised society, but to incorporate the work of guaranteeing the performance of their duties as part of their own society, and thus save the expense and trouble of keeping two staffs.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2:

*MR. HOBHOUSE said some explanation was due to the Committee with regard to Clause 2. He moved to insert the words—"Where the rules of a Registered Friendly Society or branch in force at the commencement of this Act provide for the admission as members of persons from the minimum age authorised by the principal Act, the rules shall be construed as providing for the admission as members of persons from birth." The effect of the clause was to put friendly societies and industrial insurance companies on the same footing. Industrial insurance companies were registered under the Companies Act, but all insurances with industrial companies or friendly societies were governed by the Act 14. Geo. III., cap. 48, which rendered void any policy unless the individual insuring had a pecuniary interest in the life of the person insured. Among the poorer classes to whom the Bill principally applied the only persons, probably, who could be so interested were probably parents or guardians. Under the Friendly Societies Act, 1896, a friendly society could not insure children under the age of twelve months, while industrial companies were under no such restriction, though both were under the same restriction as to the amount to be paid on the death of the child insured. The result of the restriction on the one hand and the equality on the other was that members of a friendly society went to an insurance company to insure their children before the children arrived at the age of a year and having once so insured, they did not cancel the insurance, though they might make an additional insurance in their own friendly society. This was felt to be a hardship by members of friendly societies. There was a strong feeling that it would be wiser to restrict the insurance of children under one year than to extend the power now in the possession of industrial companies to friendly societies, and upon that point he had made many inquiries. He had had the advantage of conversation and correspondence with the secretary of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, who might be considered one of the best expert witnesses available, and that gentleman, in a letter strongly supporting the clause, gave some interesting facts and figures. In nearly 49,000 cases dealt with last year, 134,000 children were concerned. Out of the total number of 134,000 children 970 died, and only about one-third of them were insured. It was clear, therefore, that the practice of insuring children for the purpose of the parents benefiting by their death had enormously decreased, and that was undoubtedly due to the operation not only of the Friendly Societies Act, 1896, but of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act of 1904. He thought that hon. Gentlemen who were interested in this subject, whatever other objection they might have to the clause, might be perfectly satisfied that it was a wise thing to extend these powers of industrial companies to friendly societies, not merely as a convenience to the members of friendly societies, but with the knowledge in their possession that the extension of that power would not lead to an extension of the insurance of children for the purpose of benefiting by their death. The industrial company at the present moment paid the benefit after the child had been insured for but a day or two; but in the case of no friendly society was any payment made until the child had been insured for three months, and in most cases not until twelve months after insurance, thus putting at a further distance the instigation to insure children in order to benefit by their death. Moreover, a friendly society which insured a child practically compelled the parents to provide it when ill with medical treatment and care, and to bring the fact of the child being ill to the notice of the society.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 17, to insert the words' 'Where the rules of a Registered Friendly Society or branch in force at the commencement of this Act provide for the admission as members of persons from the minimum age authorised by the principal Act, the rules shall be construed as providing for the admission as members of persons from birth.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

LORD BALCARRES said he did not quite understand why the first few words of the Amendment were put in. It said that the alteration could be made without any amendment of the rules—the rules should now be construed as if that amendment had been incorporated. He did not see the object of that.

MR. HOBHOUSE said he had forgotten to explain exactly the operation of the words themselves. They were quite clear. There were a great number of these friendly societies whose rules provided that they should not insure children under the age of twelve months. There were 36,000 or 37,000 friendly societies, and if every one had to send up its rules to the Chief Registrar for the purpose of altering them in order to bring them within the operation of the new words it was clear that the Registrar's time would be taken up for a very long time to come.

LORD BALCARRES said he was afraid he could not accept the hon. Member's explanation as quite adequate. In future it would be necessary until the rules were reprinted to read the statute in connection with the rules. He thought it was very desirable that the rules should be properly set forth in the documents that were handed to members. With regard to the number of deaths of insured children, there had been a happy improvement during the last eight or ten years. Personally, he still felt that there was danger in this extension, and he would prefer that the scope of industrial societies should be restricted rather than enlarged. The knowledge that a child was insured did, in certain cases, unquestionably tend to reduce the care of those responsible. The very fact that during the last twelve months, within the purview of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, something like 300 children who were insured died showed that the problem was still a really pressing one, and that there were still people who took a light view of their responsibilities. He thought this clause had danger in it and, though he would not oppose it, he would like to enter a *caveat* against it.

*MR. SHACKLETON (Lancashire, Clitheroe) thought it ought not to be allowed to go forth that the deaths of the 300 children referred to were connected with the fact that they were insured.

MR. HOBHOUSE said there was no suggestion of that kind.

*MR. SHACKLETON said that at any rate he thought it was necessary to put in a *caveat* in reference to that remark. It was necessary, no doubt, for the society to make these reports, but a statement that this thing had been going on to the extent of 300 children in a year should not be made to the outside world. He believed there was not the least danger of any such extension of the evil as the noble Lord feared. Two millions of men were looking ahead and taking advantage of these societies to make provision for themselves, and they were not the class of men who desired to make money out of the death of their children. They wanted to tell their wives to enter their children into these societies, instead of being bothered by canvassers on behalf of other societies. The hon. Gentleman representing the Treasury had said that the friendly societies did not pay in some cases until three or even twelve months after death, but that was wrong. They paid on the presentation of the doctor's or the registrar's certificate, but they provided that a person had to be in the society three or six months, or even longer, before he was entitled to receive any benefit. The hon. Gentleman would appreciate the difference,

Mr. HOBHOUSE: Yes, I do.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich) said that in giving evidence before the Bishop of Peterborough's Committee in 1891 he said that he did not believe, in spite of all the coroners and Judges, that there were parents sufficiently bad to keep their children alive for twelve months to make 30s. profit out of them. It was too long a job; there was not enough profit in it. A bad parent would be a bad parent in any case. At one time it was proposed to hand over the insurance money to the undertaker, but that was worse than the original scheme, for there was nothing to prevent the undertaker from entering into a compact with the parent to share the swag. That inquiry came to nothing, and later on there was an inquiry presided over by Lord Denbigh which resulted in the Infant Life Protection Act, which had had excellent results. In his opinion no earthly danger could happen from the passing of the clause as it stood. In the bad old days when the parent neglected a child in order to have a funeral it did not depend so much upon the insurance as upon a "friendly lead" at a public-house, where they arranged for a good drink all round. Those were the real bad times, but the system of insurance had improved things. Insurance had saved many men who otherwise would have fallen altogether if they had not made provision for funeral expenses. He was sure the noble Lord was actuated by the best possible motives, and was anxious to protect the weak, but he did not think there would be any danger in adopting this clause.

Earl WINTERTON said that on this point he agreed with the hon. Member for Clitheroe. He thought it was a little unfortunate that the Financial Secretary had mentioned the number of children insured last year, because it had given a wrong impression. He did not see that there was any evidence to show that those children died from any cause over which the parents had any control. If it was suggested that parents would do anything harmful to their children they had plenty of opportunities. He thought that they might trust the parents to allow their children to become members of friendly societies under the age of one year. It was an admirable thing that they should be encouraged to bring up their children in thrifty ways, and by joining these societies at an early age they would learn the advantages of thrift. He hoped the hon. Baronet would not oppose this Amendment.

Sir F. BANBURY said he could not see how a child could have habits of thrift inculcated when it was twelve months old.

Earl WINTERTON said that his contention was that a child insured at an early age would, when it grew up, be better able to appreciate the value of thrift than one who had not had that preliminary advantage. A child who became a member of a friendly society at an early age was much more likely to form saving habits in later years.

Sir F. BANBURY said the hon. Member for Woolwich stated that he said something before the Committee to which he referred which he would not be prepared to repeat now. He did not know whether that referred to the statement which he made before the Committee that he did not know another workman who was so well acquainted with his own class as he was.

Mr. CROOKS assured the hon. Baronet that he thought so at that time.

Sir F. BANBURY said that the hon. Member apparently was not prepared to make that statement now. He sympathised with the view which had been expressed by the noble Lord the Member for Chorley. He denied that an imputation had been cast upon friendly societies or the working classes, but thought that the Committee ought to pause before passing the clause. He protested against the habit of the Government of substituting a new Amendment with which nobody was acquainted for the Amendment on the Paper. The hon. Member for Clitheroe said that in his opinion it was extremely unlikely that any member of a friendly society would insure his children for the sake of getting the insurance. The evidence went to show that a considerable number of people had insured their children. and that that fact had tended towards the parents not exercising that care which they ought to exercise. [Cries of "No, no."] There was any amount of evidence which showed that in many cases where children had been insured, death had arisen through neglect. When the hon. Member was under examination the Chairman of the Committee asked whether it was not a fact that even among the working classes a certain number of people were bad, and the hon. Member admitted that there might be one in a thousand. The Chairman then pointed out to him that there might be a large number of deaths among the children of the working classes due to the fact that they were insured.

Mr. CROOKS said the reply to that would be "Prove it." It had never been proved that a large proportion of deaths had taken place in consequence of insurance.

Sir F. BANBURY said that Mr. Ludlow, chief registrar of friendly societies, in giving evidence before the Committee in 1891, recommended that the age should not be under six months when insurance became permissible. All the evidence went to show that there was an evil and a danger to be guarded against. The only argument which had been advanced in support of the Amendment was that insurance companies already had power to insure children, with the result that business which would otherwise go to the friendly societies went to the insurance companies. That was a point which the House ought seriously to consider, because there was a strong feeling in the country, and possibly in that House, that, instead of extending the privilege, it ought to be curtailed, or taken away altogether from the insurance companies. If they gave this power to friendly societies, it would not be possible to take it away from insurance companies. He believed that the feeling was in favour of passing this clause, and therefore he would not put the Committee to the trouble of a division.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.) said the hon. Member's opposition to the clause seemed to go on the assumption that, if this power were granted to friendly societies, it would have a tendency to increase crime; that was to say, that there would be an increased incentive to bad parents to allow their children to die in order to secure the insurance money they might be expecting. He had had the opportunity of listening in Court to many prosecutions for child murder, and sometimes, indeed very often, the motive was to secure the insurance money, but he had never found that a member of a friendly society had been prosecuted. The accused persons were always people who had insured their children in insurance societies. Why was that so? It was because members of friendly societies might *prima facie* be considered thrifty people who desired to provide for the rainy day. These were not the people who committed crime. They were the prudent, virtuous people who were the backbone of the country. Nothing but good, so far as he could see, would result from inserting this clause in the Bill.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said there had been considerable improvement in the domestic life even of the lowest of the working classes during the last seventeen years since the Committee sat and heard evidence. People were becoming much more enlightened and a great deal more interest was taken in preserving infant life than formerly among parents. He believed there were very few friendly societies that paid any kind of funeral allowance unless the deceased person had been a member for at least twelve months. In addition to that it was most important to notice that, although touts of ordinary insurance companies might admit the names on their books even of infants without inquiry, there were not many friendly societies who would admit members, juvenile or adult, unless they had certificates of health on joining. If friendly societies were allowed to undertake this business under the authority of an Act of Parliament, there was no prospect but that they would be equally strict, and, instead of assisting in the destruction of youthful life, and especially infant life, the tendency would very likely be the other way. In reference to the proposal made by the Secretary to the Treasury, he felt bound to say that he disliked the provision that societies might act without altering their rules. He thought that there should be inserted either in that House or in another place a provision in the Bill that the proposal should only operate for a certain number of years.

MR. HOBHOUSE said the proposal affected the action of societies only in respect of this one thing of the insurance of children below twelve months old. In other matters the societies would act as usual.

MR. JOHN WARD said that considering the feeling in the House with regard to allowing the privilege of insurance at all under twelve months, the societies for their own protection would probably have to make very elaborate regulations. It might be necessary to allow time for these regulations to be made and approved by the Registrar General. He therefore thought there should be some limit of time for the rules to be made in compliance with the requirements of the Act. It would not be right, in his opinion, for societies to go on for ever insuring infants under twelve months, without making any regulations or having any rules relating to the matter. He thought, therefore, that the Secretary to the Treasury should not bar out the possibility of a provision of that kind being inserted in the Bill.

Mr. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds) said it was not only in the case of the insurance of children that danger arose; it also arose in the case of the insurance of anybody who was not consulted in the matter. He thought it was rather absurd to deal with this one small point without dealing with the question as a whole. The argument of the hon. Baronet as to the payment of expenses of funerals of children under one year old was disposed of by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, who had pointed out that in hardly any case would such expenses be paid. He thought that quite apart from the danger to infant life, it was very desirable that the age for joining friendly societies should be placed at the lowest limit possible. The only result of the hon. Baronet's suggestion would be that industrial insurance societies would be greatly benefited, and, in view of the opinions expressed by leading men of the friendly societies on Whit-Monday as to the dangers to their movement involved in the old-age pension scheme of the Government, the House ought to be very careful not to consent to any measure which would handicap friendly societies. If they familiarised people with these societies from an early age, and made them proud of the institutions to which they belonged, they were far more likely, when they grew up, to continue to make contributions to these most desirable organisations. He thought friendly societies were the safest possible means for insuring the young.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. John Ward.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3:

Mr. STAVELEY-HILL objected to subsection (f) which provided that the funds of registered societies and branches might be invested "in any investment in which trustees are for the time being by law authorised to invest trust funds." Having regard to the fact that there were clauses which dealt with the questions of misappropriation and fraud in connection with these societies, it was very undesirable to widen the door through which fraud might be committed. Section 44 of the Act of 1896 was quite sufficiently wide for all purposes connected with investments by friendly societies, and there was no necessity for this clause.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he understood considerable difficulty had arisen as to the meaning of the word "security" in Section 44 of the principal Act, by which friendly societies were empowered to invest money "upon any other security expressly directed." It was in order to get over that difficulty that, in this clause, power was given to friendly societies to invest "in any investment in which trustees are for the time being by law authorised to invest trust funds."

Lord R. CECIL said that as he understood the clause it empowered friendly societies to invest in any security mentioned in their rules, and in addition to that, to invest in securities known as trustee investments. The latter list was enormously long, and included all Colonial Government stocks and railway stocks, where interest had been paid on ordinary stock for three years, and stocks of that kind. It added enormously to the liberty of the investment on the part of friendly societies, and he was not sure the clause would accomplish what the Financial Secretary to the Treasury said was its real object.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 4, 5, and 6 agreed to.

Clause 7.

MR. HOBHOUSE said he proposed to insert some Amendments in this clause in order to meet the difficulties raised by the hon. Baronet and the noble Lord the Member for Chorley during the debate on the Second Reading and also the wishes of the friendly societies. These difficulties had been very fairly put before the House, and had been considered by himself.

Amendments proposed—

In page 2, line 23, to insert the words 'Subsection 3 of."

"In page 2, line 25, leave out the word 'subsection,' and to insert the word 'proviso.'"—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Amendments agreed to.

MR. HOBHOUSE moved to leave out the word "and," in line 25, and the whole of subsection 6, for the purpose of inserting those words, "Provided that where, on such a complaint against a person of withholding or misapplying property, or applying it for unauthorised purposes, it is not proved that that person has acted with any fraudulent intent, he may be ordered to deliver up all such property or to repay any sums of money applied improperly, but shall not be liable to be imprisoned under this section in default of such delivery, or to payment of any fine." The sub-section as originally drawn and printed in the Bill was incapable of carrying out the intention of the promoters. It would have had the undesirable result of entirely altering the common law, whereby the onus of proving guilt was laid upon the prosecution. That would have been an alteration of the common law for the benefit of a particular class. A real and serious difficulty had arisen in the case of a friendly society having a defaulting secretary or treasurer. Let them suppose that a treasurer had been given under the rules of the society a sum of money to be cared for for the benefit of the society, that he got into trouble over his own business and used that money, and that when the time came for the society to get back their money he was not in a position to repay it, or to say where the money had gone. If the society prosecuted him in order to obtain an order against him for the repayment of the money, the society had to prove that he was fraudently withholding it. It was impossible in many cases to furnish proof of fraud, and consequently the magistrates refused to make an order. Under the proviso which he proposed, the magistrates, even if there was no proof of fraud, could make an order for the restitution of the property; and on the other hand, unless the society could prove under the ordinary law that an official had been guilty of fraud he would not be liable to imprisonment or fine. He hoped that the new proviso would be acceptable to the Committee.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 25, to leave out subsection (6), and insert 'Provided that where, on such a complaint against a person of withholding or misapplying property, or applying it for unauthorised purposes, it is not proved that that person has acted with any fraudulent intent, he may be ordered to deliver up all such property or to repay any sums of money applied improperly, but shall not be liable to be imprisoned under this section in default of such delivery, or to payment of any fine.' "—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Question proposed, " That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

*MR. STAVELEY-HILL said he was glad that the hon. Gentleman had withdrawn the sub-clause, to which strong objection had been taken on the Second Reading of the Bill. He was not quite sure that he fully appreciated the effect of the new proviso, as it did not appear on the Paper, and had only been read over by the hon. Gentleman; but they would have an opportunity of discussing the words suggested on the Report stage. So far as he understood it, the hon. Gentleman's proviso had not altered the law as originally set forth in the principal Act. He understood that the reason for this sub-clause was that in the case of Barret v. Markham in the year 1872, a treasurer was there charged with withholding trust funds, but it was held that he could not be convicted unless he had acted fraudulently. He thought that the great mischief in the subsection of the Bill would be removed by the new proviso so long as the onus was put on the prosecution of proving that there was fraud.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that there had been complaints about the clause as originally framed, and they had to thank the Financial Secretary to the Treasury for having made some approach to a desirable change in it. He would point out, however, that there was a danger that procedure under the new proviso would still be a criminal procedure. There was always a temptation to societies to resort to such procedure, to which a stigma attached, for the purpose of recovering a civil debt, without duly considering whether there were grounds for making a charge of fraud.

MR. JOHN WARD said there was one point which he would not like the hon. Member to overlook in connection with this Amendment of the law with regard to the wilful withholding or misapplying by an official of funds of a society or trade union. At present the law was the same in the case of friendly societies as in that of trade unions. In cases where a trade union made an accusation against one of its officers, the union rarely charged him with fraud; they only charged him with withholding or misapplying the funds, which involved a fine or three months imprisonment. That was sufficient for the purpose of recovering the money. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury proposed to alter the law in favour of the friendly societies by removing imprisonment unless fraud was proved, leaving the remedy to a magistrate's order for the restitution of the money. If the order was not obeyed, the accused could be imprisoned for contempt of Court. That procedure would involve friendly societies in considerable cost, in order to get the magistrates' order for the restitution of the money carried out. His fear was that if the suggested change were made it would be taken as a precedent for altering the law with reference to trade unions. As he did not wish to obstruct the passage of this Bill, he hoped the hon. Gentleman would reconsider the subject before the Report stage, and see whether it would not injure trade unions.

MR. HOBHOUSE was understood to indicate that the point raised would be considered.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

MR. HOBHOUSE said the new clause he now proposed, was really to enable officers and servants of friendly societies to be insured in the friendly societies.

New clause—

"In Section forty-one of the principal Act 'three hundred pounds' shall be substituted for 'two hundred pounds,' and 'fifty-two pounds' for 'fifty pounds,' as the maximum amount a member or person claiming through a member of a registered friendly society or branch is entitled to receive by way of gross sum and by way of annuity respectively."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)—

Brought up and read a first and second time, and added to the Bill.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that the next new clause he proposed was to meet the case where funeral or other funds were centralised in a society or district branch and the member's subscription was paid through the lodge to which he belonged. There had been some little difficulty where people had paid the lodge secretary and the central authority was responsible for the payment and this clause was to clear up that difficulty.

New clause—

"To Section fifty-six of the principal Act which relates to nominations, the following Sub-section shall be added: (6) A nomination or variation or revocation of a nomination in writing, signed by a member of a branch, and delivered at or sent to the registered office of the branch of which he is a member, or made in a book kept at that office, shall be effectual, although the money to which the nomination relates or some part thereof may not be payable by that branch, but is payable by the society or some other branch thereof."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)—

Brought up, and read a first and second time, and added to the Bill.

*EARL WINTERTON, in proposing a new clause amending Section 35 of the principal Act, said he moved this clause with some diffidence as it involved a question of some importance and a legal point of some intricacy with which he did not feel competent to deal. He moved it, however, because he was anxious to remove what had been a source of danger to friendly societies in the past. The Bill quoted the words of the principal Act and brought it under review, and he moved this clause in order to amend Section 35 of the principal Act. Section 35 dealt with the preference given by the principal Act to friendly societies in respect to the recovery of property which might be claimed by them on the death or bankruptcy of an officer of a registered friendly society. It gave to the society interested a preference over other creditors obtaining against the property of a deceased officer, but there appeared to be no authoritative decision as to whether that preference extended to any costs which the friendly society might be put to, in order to recover what was due to them from the widows or executors of the deceased officer. There was a case in which the principal officer of a friendly society died having money belonging to the society in his possession. Being unable to recover the money due to them from the widow, the society took proceedings against her. The case proceeded for some time and then the widow paid, through her solicitors, the money in question, a sum of £51 13s. 1d., but disputed the society's right to have their costs paid as a preference claim. Eventually the deceased's estate became bankrupt. The plaintiff society then endeavoured to obtain their costs, but were unable to do so because the costs of the defendant, the widow, were allowed first, and they were taxed at £226, an amount which swallowed up the whole estate. His object in moving this clause was to extend the preference, which already existed as to the claim, to the costs which might be necessary to recover it. He had been advised and he himself believed that that was the intention of the framers of the original Act, and, therefore, he begged to move.

New Clause—

"At the end of sub-section 1 of Section 35 of the principal Act shall be added the words 'and if, in consequence of the non-payment of the money or non-delivery of the money or non-delivery of the property to such trustees, they shall take proceedings in a court of law to enforce payment or delivery as aforesaid, they shall be entitled by a live preference in receipt of their taxed costs relative to such proceedings as is given them by this section with regard to money or property in such possession as aforesaid.'"—(*Earl Winterton.*)

Brought up and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be read a second time."

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he did not know whether it was his fault or whether it was because the new clause had only just been put on the Paper, but he had had no opportunity of consulting the Law Officers upon it. Subject, however, to any alteration which he might have to make on Report he saw no objection to accepting it.

Question put, and agreed to, and clause added to the Bill.

Bill reported; as amended to be considered upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 272.]

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [LORDS].

Order for Second Reading read.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. KEARLEY, Devonport) said the object of this Bill was to make clear the Patent and Designs Act of last year. Doubt seemed to have arisen in the minds of some patent lawyers as to whether the appeal to the House of Lords in case of the revocation of a patent by a lower Court was safeguarded and conserved, and the Bill was introduced to clear up the matter.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Kearley.*)

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes after Four o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 22nd June, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders have not been complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the following Bill:—Ards and Bangor Railway.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Commons Amendment to Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Finchley Urban District Council Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Alliance and other Assurance and Insurance Companies Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill: Order for the Second Reading on Wednesday next discharged: Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Tyne Improvement Bill; Widnes Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Troon (Loch Bradan) Water Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Troon (Loch Bradan) Water—Was presented by the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell (for the Lord Herschell) (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 102.)

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.] (Bridgwater Order); Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.] (Potteries, etc. Order); Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.] (Sevenoaks and Stourbridge Water Orders); Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.] (No. 1 Order).—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Ribblesdale; and that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.]; Margate Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill; Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.]; West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Lord Ribblesdale; and that the Lord Clifford of Chudleigh be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

NEWRY, KEADY AND TYNAN RAILWAY.—PETITION FOR BILL.

THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend Lord Shaftesbury, who is in Ireland in command of the North of Ireland Yeomanry and unable to be in his place to-day, I rise to move that the Report of the Standing Orders Committee made on 20th May last upon the petition for a Bill by the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway Company be further considered, and that the Report and the Examiner's

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders in respect of the said Petition be referred back to the Standing Orders Committee for further consideration and report.

The circumstances are as follows:—The promoters have been working to secure this Bill for nearly eight years. The Great Northern Railway opposed the Bill on its merits, but were defeated in the year 1900. In consequence of bad advice given by their local counsel, the promoters now find themselves in the position of being too late to give the necessary notice and to act in the proper way in the matter of procedure. Their legal expenses during the eight years have amounted to £22,000. The proposed railway was designed to develop a district thickly inhabited with a poor but remarkably industrious people. A free grant of £75,000 out of the Irish Development Grant has been sanctioned by the Treasury, on the recommendation of two Viceroys of Ireland and three Chief Secretaries. An additional £50,000 has been locally guaranteed. The remaining capital has been provided by public subscription, and the contract for the construction of the railway had actually been made when this mistake was discovered.

I hope that, in these circumstances, your Lordships will regard this as an exceptional case. The district, as I have said, is not a rich one. It contains a thrifty and hopeful population, and I may incidentally remark that it is a great recruiting ground for the Army. I know that in asking your Lordships to adopt this Motion I am making a very unusual request, but there is a precedent for it in the action taken last session in regard to the Collooney Railway Bill. That Bill came up late, but the Standing Orders were dispensed with, the line forming part of what is known as the All Red Route. Ireland is very poor and it is difficult to find people ready to subscribe to any project of this nature.

The promoters of the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway are in no way railway sharks. It is not a question of making money out of the line. There is philanthropy in the matter; and in view of these facts I trust your Lordships will be able to agree to the Motion. If you do not there will, of course, be delay, and the effect will be that the promoters will be frozen out. Postponement for a year, due to a blunder which ordinary promoters would probably not have made, will mean the wrecking of the scheme, as it would necessitate a demand upon the resources of the promoters which they would not have the means of meeting. I knew nothing of this matter until Saturday last, when I was asked by my noble friend Lord Shaftesbury to move the Motion on his behalf. I have, however, taken the greatest trouble to inquire into it, and I have every confidence in asking your Lordships to consider favourably, in the spirit of conciliation, the proposition which I now beg to move.

Moved, "That the Report of the Standing Orders Committee made on 20th May last, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the Petition for a Bill by the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway Company ought not to be dispensed with, and which was read and agreed to by this House on that date be further considered, and the Report and the Examiner's Certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders in respect of the said Petition be referred back to the Standing Orders Committee for further consideration and report."—(*The Earl of Mayo.*)

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, perhaps I ought to say a word or two before any other Member of the Standing Orders Committee addresses your Lordships. The noble Earl who has just sat down stated that there was a precedent for what he asked your Lordships to do in the case of a railway last year. I think it can hardly be said that that is a precedent for this proposal, because in the case of the Collooney Railway the Standing Orders Committee themselves decided to recommend your Lordships to dispense with the Standing Orders. There have, nevertheless, been cases where this House has referred back the decision of the Standing Orders Committee to that Committee.

The Collooney case was a very exceptional case indeed. There was a subsidy from Canada depending on the construction of that railway. It was to form part of what is known as the All Red Route, and in deciding that the Standing Orders might be dispensed with the Committee were very careful to say that they did not wish that it should in any way be considered as a precedent. Now the noble Earl asks your Lordships to refer this matter back to the Standing Orders Committee on grounds which, I am afraid, are very familiar to members of that Committee, namely, that in Ireland people are very poor, that in Ireland they are often very forgetful, that in Ireland they do things which would not be expected of Englishmen, and, generally, that they ought to be forgiven for all their sins both of commission and of omission.

Your Lordships are being asked to condone the omissions of the promoters of this railway and refer the matter back to the Standing Orders Committee. I think your Lordships are quite as capable of judging as I can be whether this *ad misericordiam* appeal ought to be considered or not. All I will say is that the Standing Orders Committee is a very carefully selected Committee. It is a numerous Committee, it hears the agents on both sides, and it considers very carefully any reasons which may be adduced for dispensing with the Standing Orders. I am not aware that this railway received less consideration than any other, but the fact certainly remains that the Standing Orders Committee were unanimous in thinking there would be no very great hardship if the promoters of this line had to wait for another year. The noble Earl tells us that there will be very great hardship, and that in all probability these philanthropic gentlemen will come to the end of their tether if they are not allowed to proceed with the Bill during the present session of Parliament.

Therefore, it is for your Lordships to consider whether this is one of those cases in which Ireland should be treated quite exceptionally, and whether you should refer the matter back to the Standing Orders Committee. But remember that if you do, there is every possibility that the Committee may adhere to their decision and you may find yourselves no better off. I cannot refrain from entering a protest against the line which has been taken in regard to this matter. The Standing Orders Committee came to their decision on 20th May, and over a month has elapsed without any action being taken.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I only desire to add a word to what has been said by the noble Earl the Chairman of Committees. There is one thing which the noble Earl omitted to tell the House—namely, the date on which this Bill was introduced. As your Lordships know, notices of Bills must be given in November, but no step whatever was taken with regard to this Bill until, I think, 20th April. Just think what that means. The Standing Orders of the House require that notice should be given in November, in order that possible opponents should be afforded time to consider what course they will take. This Bill offended against every Standing Order relating to Private Bills. No notices were given, and no one knew anything of it until April.

Some opponents appeared before the Standing Orders Committee and pointed out that their position would be very much prejudiced if this excessive deviation from the Standing Orders were allowed. What is the answer of the promoters? They say: "We received very bad advice." Is that the fault of the Standing Orders Committee or of your Lordships' House? They then say: "We are very poor." Well, we reply that we are very sorry, but that is not a matter concerning the Standing Orders Committee. The promoters further say that if they are allowed to have their Bill they will receive a very large grant from the Treasury. I daresay the Treasury will be quite as generous next year. At all events, these are circumstances which really have nothing whatsoever to do with the case.

The whole case is this: Are you going to have Standing Orders at all? If you are, I cannot imagine a more flagrant transgression of the Standing Orders. The noble Earl has said that we were perfectly unanimous. Of course we were. How could we be otherwise? I do not remember a case of such a serious transgression of the Standing Orders, and I hope the House will not think of acceding to a request of this sort. It is the more peculiar because the noble Earl who has placed the Motion on the Paper and is most interested in the matter is not able to be here. That is Irish at all events. Then he handed over the case to the noble Earl Lord Mayo, who knew nothing of the matter, he tells us, until Saturday. He occupied Sunday working it up, and now appeals *ad misericordiam* to your Lordships to agree to his Motion. I can only say that I hope your Lordships will do nothing of the kind.

THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I should like to state this fact, that though the Great Northern Railway are opposing this Bill, they are not opposing it on its merits, but because the Standing Orders have not been complied with.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, before the Question is put I may, perhaps, be permitted to say one word, though I confess I am very imperfectly acquainted with the circumstances of the case. I waited because I had supposed that, if the matter was one in which such great interest was taken in Ireland, some other noble Lord from that country would have risen to support the *ad misericordiam* plea of Lord Mayo. I think we are placed in a further difficulty by the almost over-judicious speech of my noble friend the Lord Chairman, because I confess that I was not able to form an opinion, from what he said, as to whether he thought it was reasonable or not that, under these particular circumstances, this undoubtedly great concession should be made. The only opinion that we have had is a very strong one to the contrary from my noble friend opposite, Lord Camperdown, who, as we know, is a stern mentor in these matters. We are all, I think, grateful to him for being so. At the same time we know that he does take a somewhat rigid view of this question. On the whole, I confess that in this instance I am inclined to the side of mercy. I wish the case had been a little bit more developed than it has been by noble Lords from Ireland, but although I do not profess to have a strong opinion on the subject, I do not think that any real harm will be done if in this instance the matter were referred back to the Standing Orders Committee.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE: My Lords, as a member of the Standing Orders Committee I should like to say that I am certainly of opinion that this is not a case in which the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with, and I am confident that other members of the Committee would be prepared to support that view.

*LORD ZOUCHE OF HARYNGWORTH: My Lords, I happen to be a member of the Standing Orders Committee, but I was not present when this Bill was before it. I cannot help observing that the noble Earl who has moved the Motion now before the House has not brought any very weighty reason to bear for upsetting the decision of the Committee, beyond the general disappointment which is always felt when a Bill is thrown out under the Standing Orders. I can fully endorse every word that has fallen from my noble friend the Lord Chairman who so ably presides over this Committee. Everything is most minutely and dispassionately gone into, and it would be a serious thing indeed to reverse the decision of the Committee when no adequate reasons in justification of such a step have been brought forward.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, my inclination is to err on the side of mercy in cases like this, but when we are asked to allow *ad misericordiam* considerations to prevail I think it is due to us that a strong case should be established for the kind of concession we are asked to make this evening. My noble friend Lord Mayo, who, according to his own admission, had but a very imperfect knowledge of the case, was really not able to tell us much except that this Bill affected a very poor district in Ireland—a district which no doubt looked forward with much hope to the passing of this measure. But if we are to condone breaches of the Standing Orders whenever a hard case of that kind presents itself, I am afraid we shall find that our Standing Orders will cease to be any protection to us. The noble

Earl the Chairman of Committees, who is naturally our guide upon occasions of this kind, made a speech which I certainly interpreted as anything but a speech in favour of dispensing with the Standing Orders. We have had weighty statements from two other members of the Committee, and if the House goes to a division I shall vote in support of the Standing Orders.

On Question, Motion negatived.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRANSVAAL.

Statement of mortality amongst the different classes of coloured labour in the Transvaal mines, from January 1906, to February, 1908, inclusive.

COLONIES.

(Annual.)—No. 560. St. Helena: Report for 1907.

(Miscellaneous.)—No. 52. Report on Native Education in South Africa. Part III. Education in the Protectorates, by E. B. Sargant, Education Adviser to the High Commissioner for South Africa.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 4000. China (Newchwang).

No. 4003. Japan (Consular District of Hakodate).

No. 4016. Netherlands (Curaçao and its Dependencies).

No. 4017. Germany (Samoa).

No. 4018. Norway (Norwegian Budget for 1908–1909).

No. 4021. Mexico (Consular District of Vera Cruz).

No. 4022. France (Rouen).

No. 4023. Portugal (Province of Mozambique).

No. 4024. Turkey (Basra).

No. 4025. Italy (Sicily).

No. 4026. Japan.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Report of the Royal Commission upon the duties of the Metropolitan Police, together with Appendices. (Volume I.)

GOVERNMENT LABORATORY.

Report of the Principal Chemist upon the work of the Government Laboratory, for the year ended 31st March, 1908; with Appendices.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN INDIA).

Return of all loans raised in India chargeable on the revenues of India outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ended 31st March, 1908, with the rates of interest and total amount payable thereon, etc.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST, EXCEPT PARCELS).

The Foreign and Colonial Post Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908, dated 28th May, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL.

Brought from the Commons and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 103.)

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

Brought from the Commons and read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 104.)

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.]

Amendment reported (according to order). A further Amendment made; Bill to be read 3ª To-morrow; and to be printed as amended. (No. 106.)

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Lord BALFOUR of BURLEIGH: My Lords, I ask the indulgence of your Lordships to put a Question to the noble Earl the Leader of the House, of which I gave him private notice last week, namely, when do the Government intend to take a further stage of the Land Values (Scotland) Bill? A somewhat unusual interval has already elapsed, and therefore I think it fair to ask the Government what their intentions are in regard to the matter. I certainly should not for a moment enter upon the controversy of the matter on an occasion like this, but I may briefly recall the circumstances.

It is about a month since we were in Committee, when two important Amendments were inserted—one making the Bill optional, and the other substituting yearly for capital value as the basis of the new valuation roll. As far as the latter Amendment is concerned, it was described by the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as a point for Committee; and I think I may safely say that a great deal of the difficulty in which we were placed was on account of, I will not use the word misrepresentation, but on account of the want of complete understanding on the part of at least one of the Law Officers of the Crown for Scotland as to what were the real intentions of the Government with regard to this Bill. While there was a distinct dislike on the part of the Government to the substitution of yearly for capital value, I did not gather, from the subsequent discussion which took place as to the definition of yearly value, that if we were to have a further stage of the Bill, agreement on that point would be altogether hopeless.

Certainly some words which I ventured to suggest were not accepted by the House. Possibly they were defective, but they constituted an honest attempt to put into drafting language what had been the substance of the Report, for which I was responsible, of the Local Taxation Commission. The point I want to press is this, that although my words were not accepted, I certainly did not gather from the tone of the discussion, that an agreement might be altogether hopeless if we were to take a further stage of the Bill. I therefore trust that the noble Earl the Leader of the House will be able to tell us that he proposes to give year Lordships a further opportunity of discussing the Bill.

THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I am obliged to the noble Lord for giving me notice of this Question. We are certainly willing to put down the Bill for any date which may be convenient to the House at large. Our view is simply this, that the Bill has been so very materially altered by the Amendments which your Lordships had been pleased to make in it that it has ceased to be in substance the Government Bill. But still we are quite of opinion that it is proper it should go down to another place, in the form which is acceptable to your Lordships House, for consideration there; and, therefore, I will consult the noble Marquess opposite as to the date on which it will be convenient that the next stage should be taken.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I am glad that my noble friend beside me has elicited the statement to which we have just listened. We were somewhat puzzled by the action of His Majesty's Government in not naming a day for the further stage of this Bill. I think my noble friend has given the House a perfectly accurate account of the discussion which took place when the Bill was before us in Committee. We on this side objected very strongly to the introduction of any words calculated to bring about the recognition of prospective value for the purpose of rating. We pointed out that the admission of that principle would work very grievous injustice to site owners, but we were constantly told that there was one case, at any rate, in which some change in the law was urgently called for. That case, which was often cited by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, was the case of owners of sites, who, for perverse reasons, held back land actually available for building purposes to the detriment of the neighbourhood and in such a manner as to work injustice to other ratepayers. We commented on the fact that cases of this kind were not produced, but we admitted that such cases were conceivable, and my noble friend brought forward words intended to meet them. Those words were not accepted, but we made it perfectly plain that if noble Lords opposite or anybody else would bring up words not open to the objection which we entertained, we were prepared to consider them. I think it would have been very unfair to your Lordships' House, and very unusual, if, merely for the reason that we introduced considerable Amendments in Committee, we had been denied the usual opportunity of again considering the Bill on the Report stage. I am, therefore, glad to hear that the noble Earl proposes to put the Bill down again.

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the Report from the Select Committee.

THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I have the honour to introduce this subject as I was chosen to be the Chairman of the Committee appointed last year, on the Motion of my noble friend Lord Burghclere. Your Lordships will remember that the Committee was appointed to deal with the Standing Orders so far as they affected order in debate, and that afterwards a further reference was made to the same Committee of the case of Peers who had sat in the House without taking the oath. I do not think that my noble friend Lord Burghclere initiated this Committee with any very extravagant hopes as to the scope of its operations. What I think he desired to do was to call attention to what he considered one or two defects in the procedure of the House and to suggest some moderate alterations.

Your Lordships have, I dare say—some of you, at any rate—made yourselves familiar with the contents of the Report. You will observe that the first subject with which it deals is the only one which I think can be regarded as being at this moment controversial, because it is the subject of an Amendment by Lord Burghclere in the event of the Report receiving the assent of your Lordships. That subject is a rather difficult one. It is as to whether the Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees should be given any further formal control over the debates in your Lordships' House than they possess at present; and, as those who look at the Report of our proceedings will see, there was a marked difference of opinion in the Committee on that point. A division took place, with the result that the votes were equal, and, under the *præsumitur pro negante* rule, my noble friend's Motion was lost.

I think it would, perhaps, save time if I say a word on the merits of that Motion instead of waiting for the Amendment of my noble friend. The first question to be considered was whether the Lord Chancellor should be given some powers, if not as wide as, at any rate analogous to those possessed by Mr. Speaker in the House of Commons; and it will be noticed that my noble friend did not ultimately propose to confer those powers upon the Lord Chancellor. There are, no doubt, strong arguments against that, felt by my noble friend and by none, I fancy, more than by my noble and learned friend on the Woolsack. There are two very obvious objections. In the first place, the Lord Chancellor is a prominent Member of the Government of the day, and therefore occupies an entirely different position from that of Mr. Speaker. There is this further point which has to be remembered, that the Lord Chancellor always comes to the House as a new Member; and although he may gain experience rapidly, yet there would be something almost ridiculous in placing a new Member of your Lordships' House in the position of Speaker, with powers of a fairly stringent character with regard to order in debate.

Then my noble friend Lord Burghclere fell back upon the Lord Chairman, and argued that it was in Committee that such powers were more likely to be needed than in the full House. He proposed that the powers should be conferred on the Lord Chairman, and that was a point on which a division took place. The noble Earl the Lord Chairman will be able to state his own views on the subject, but I think it is evident that it would be rather difficult to confer upon the Lord Chairman powers not possessed by the Lord Chancellor. That is one argument against the practice which I myself have not been able to get over. The other argument, which appeals to the conservatism I feel with regard to your Lordships' House, is that we have got on very well as we are. There have been, so far as I am aware, no occasions on which there has been any serious trouble in debate, although there may have been short moments of a certain degree of confusion. I should greatly hesitate, therefore, to make such a far-reaching change as this appears to me to be, and consequently I recorded my vote against my noble friend's proposal. That is, I think, the only matter of controversy with regard to the Report.

We propose that certain additions should be made to the Standing Orders of the House, borrowed, not from the Standing Orders of the House of Commons but from the Manual, which has a sort of semi-official authority in that Assembly, having been laid on the Table by the Clerk of the House on the instruction of Mr. Speaker; and we propose that a similar Manual should be laid on the Table of this House. That Manual was drawn up to a considerable extent by a very great authority upon Parliamentary procedure, the late Sir John Shaw Lefevre when he was Clerk of the Parliaments. It never was actually completed to his satisfaction, but it is in a form which makes it quite easy both to bring it up to date and to complete it, and I am informed that it has been carefully revised since the Committee sat. It is in type now, and will be ready to be laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House on the first day of next session. Then we further propose that certain directions on the mode of putting the question should be incorporated in the Manual. Those, also, are borrowed from the procedure of the House of Commons, which is similar to that of this House in these matters of putting Amendments, though, as your Lordships may have noticed, not always similar to that which obtains at meetings of other public bodies of which some of your Lordships are members.

Then we came to the entirely separate question of Peers who sat or voted without having taken the oath. Your Lordships will remember that there were several cases during the life of the present Parliament in which noble Lords sat, without having taken the oath, and made themselves liable to very considerable fines under the Statute which regulates those matters. We did not feel that it would be wise to recommend any statutory alteration in this matter, and consequently we fell back upon the expedient of making it as difficult as possible for noble Lords to fall into this unfortunate, and, indeed, serious error. We suggested, therefore, that a circular should be sent round at the beginning of every Parliament to Peers who had not taken the oath. As your Lordships know, a list is prepared containing the names of those Lords who have not yet been sworn, and it is suggested that at the beginning of every session a similar circular should be sent to them. What happens, I think, is this, that noble Lords take the oath once, having joined the House either by creation or succession, and do not always realise that the necessity operates at the beginning of every fresh Parliament. We think that this gentle reminder will prevent their falling into the error.

There is one point which I overlooked with regard to the first suggestion of an addition to the Standing Orders. It reads thus—

> "Every Motion, after it has been moved, shall be proposed from the Woolsack or the Chair before debate thereon."

That is to say, it is desirable that the House should be formally apprised of what the business before it is. But the Committee did not take that to mean that every Amendment, for instance, should be read in full from the Chair before it is put. The noble Earl the Chairman of Committees supplied me with an Amendment to the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill, moved by Lord Atkinson, which covered between four and five pages of the paper. If the noble Earl the Lord Chairman had had to read that in full when it was put I am afraid your Lordships might have found the process rather long. Consequently it must be clearly understood that this proposed Standing Order does not mean that; and I believe that the practice of the other House would support us in construing it in that way. I have nothing further to add, and I beg to move that this Report be agreed to.

Moved, "That the Report be agreed to."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to; and the following Rules made Standing Orders of the House: "Every Motion after it has been moved, shall be proposed from the Woolsack or the Chair before debate thereon. Debate must be relevant to the Question before the House, and where more than one Question has been put the debate must be relevant to the last Question so proposed until it has been disposed of. An Amendment to a Question must not be inconsistent with a previous decision on the same Question given on the same Bill at the same stage."

LORD BURGHCLERE, who had given notice, in the event of the recommendation of the said Committee that Rules (2) and (3) be made Standing Orders of the House being agreed to, to move that the following additional Rule be also made a Standing Order, viz.—

(4) It shall be the duty of the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman to point out to the House or to the Committee, as the case may be, any transgression of these rules, when in his opinion, it is necessary to do so.

said: My Lords, the recommendations of the Committee having been agreed to it is now my duty to make a few observations on the Motion I have ventured to place upon the Paper. I am bound to say, judging from the speech of my noble friend the Leader of the House, that there exists considerable misapprehension as to the meaning of the additional rule which I am asking your Lordships to consider.

But before I deal with that especial subject, I would venture very shortly, as I have been pressed to place before the House all the Resolutions which were not accepted by the Committee, to say why I have not done so. Those of your Lordships who have read this Report will have observed that there were a certain number of suggestions which it fell to my lot, by the desire of the Committee, to make and which practically formed the main subjects of our discussion. They are to be found on pages v. and vi. of the Committee's Report. Of those suggestions three have been accepted—those numbered (1), (2), and (4)—and they are now, by the Resolution of your Lordships' House, Standing Orders of this Assembly. Those Resolutions may seem very innocent ones, and may appear at first hand almost unnecessary; but I venture to think the fact of making them Standing Orders of the House gives them an importance which they would not otherwise have. Moreover, they thoroughly justify the appointment of the Committee for which I moved last year.

The most important of my suggestions that were negatived by the Committee are to be found on page vi., and are numbered I., II., and III. They deal with a subject which has often been brought before your Lordship's House, namely, whether the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman should have the power to name any Peer who rises to speak, and whether, in the event of more Lords than one rising at the same time, the Lord whose name is called from the Woolsack or the Chair should have possession of the House. On that point your Lordships will see that I especially inserted the reservation—

"Unless the House decide otherwise."

The naming of a Peer from the Woolsack or the Chair seems to me a mere formality convenient for the procedure of your Lordships' House. It is a formality, moreover, which is common to every deliberative assembly in the world, and I do not myself see what the special objection to it is on the part of the Lord Chancellor, of the Lord Chairman, or of this House. It would not curtail the freedom of other Members. This House does not lack opportunity for the ventilation of individual eloquence, and I am quite certain that if this suggestion had been adopted not one single Member would have lost any opportunity he now enjoys of addressing your Lordships.

As I have said, in making this suggestion I specially reserved the power of the House to decide otherwise. It has been said that it would be a reflection upon the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman if, when several Members rose to address the House and he named one, the House then, as it would be able to do under my proposition, decided that it would rather hear somebody else. I do not see how that could be, because, if one is named and the assembly thinks another who had risen ought to have an immediate opportunity of speaking, his name is generally called out, and the speaker named from the chair usually gives way. That would be exactly the position in this House supposing the House took a different view from that of the Lord Speaker or the Lord Chairman. But this is a privilege of which the House has always been jealous. The noble Earl the Leader of the House pointed out, in the debate on the appointment of this Committee, that this proposal was brought forward by Lord Stanhope in 1869; I know it was proposed in the eighties; and I have a misty recollection that it was brought forward as far back as the end of the 18th or the beginning of the

19th century. Notwithstanding that that was a highly revolutionary period in the history of the world, the proposal was on that occasion negatived; and I have a firm belief that if, in the year 2008, a similar proposition were brought forward it would not meet with approval in this Assembly. These important suggestions were brought before the Committee and negatived, and I, for my part, see no use in pressing them further.

Your Lordships will see that the Motion on the Paper does include the name of the Lord Chancellor. It provides that—

> "It shall be the duty of the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman to point out to the House or to the Committee, as the case may be, any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."

I will explain why I put it down in those words. Of all the Resolutions that were accepted or negatived, this particular Resolution was not really determined upon. The voting in the Committee was six on one side and six on the other, and it was merely negatived on account of the ancient rule, *Semper præsumitur pro negante,* under which, when the voting is equal, it is taken as resolved in the negative. I therefore thought it my duty to bring it before the House as a whole, so that your Lordships should have an opportunity of considering it. That is also the reason why I have put it down in the *ipsissima verba* in which it was voted upon in Committee.

My original proposition did not include the Lord Chancellor. It was restricted to the Lord Chairman, on whom I felt the responsibility ought to fall. There seems to be some misapprehension as to the meaning of this particular Resolution. It neither adds to, nor detracts from, any of the powers at present held by either the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman. Its only effect would be, if your Lordships consented to make it a Standing Order of the House, that it would be a solemn and serious recommendation to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman that they should use, with greater vigour and authority, those powers which they now possess. It may be asked, is there any necessity for such a recommendation being made to the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman? I think that what took place during the proceedings in Committee upon the Education Bill of 1906 proves the necessity. The reasons for some strengthening of the hands of the noble Lord who presides over this House when in Committee are the increased attendance of Members, the increased speech-making, and the increased number of Amendments submitted.

I venture to think that in assenting to the appointment of this Select Committee both the noble Marquess opposite and my noble friend beside me were to some extent—I do not say wholly—moved by their experience in the discussions in the Committee stage upon the Education Bill of 1906. The noble Marquess opposite said—

> "No doubt there are minor points covering our procedure which require reconsideration, in view of the fact—and it is a fact—that the number of Peers who take part in our debates tends to increase, and that the speeches tend to increase in length."

The period when the attendance and the speeches particularly increased was that of the Committee stage of the Education Bill, and therefore I am bound to think that to some extent at any rate, it was the experience of the noble Marquess at that time that induced him to consent to the appointment of this Select Committee. But the noble Earl the Leader of the House was far more definite on that point. He said—

> "I am very far from joining in all such criticisms as were made on the conduct of business during the Committee stage of the Education Bill. On the other hand, there was, as the noble Lord has said, a considerable degree of irrelevance, and I think it is not overstating the case to say that one day, and possibly two days, of the Committee stage might have been spared to us if noble Lords had confined themselves to the actual matter under discussion."

In other words, the experience which my noble friend had during the Committee stage of the Education Bill led him to assent to the appointment of this Committee to see whether our procedure could not be improved.

The proposition before the House has, I think, been misunderstood. There need be no fear that it would put the Lord Chancellor, if it is accepted for the Lord Chancellor, in the position of the Speaker of the House of Commons. Nor does it add to the authority of the Lord

Chairman. All it does is to put on Paper the hope of the House that the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman will, in moments of difficulty and confusion, exercise greater vigour with the authority they now possess. The Resolution will not in any way limit the elasticity—the most desirable elasticity, as I think—of our proceedings. I had hoped to claim the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition as a supporter of my Resolution. I certainly can claim the support of my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, because on the appointment of this Committee he said—

> "I think real good may come of it, in a general discussion of the matter, and by strengthening the hands of those who, from their position and experience, may be regarded, if not as official guardians of order, as its unofficial guardians."

There is no more practical way of strengthening the hands of the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman than by affirming, in a Standing Order, the hope of the House that they will, in moments of difficulty, exercise their authority with greater vigour. The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition said—

> "I am bound to say, as the result of a somewhat long experience of this House, that I have never myself known a case in which the House was not grateful for the guidance offered it, either by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack or by the noble Lord who sits at the Table."

I cannot imagine a more practical form of showing gratitude than by passing a Standing Order demonstrating the confidence of the House in the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman.

As I have said, this proposition is not the one I originally submitted to the Committee. I then exempted the Lord Chancellor. I did so because my noble and learned friend protested strongly against being included, and I thought it was not for me to come in conflict with him in that matter. The Lord Chancellor no doubt stands in a different position from the Lord Chairman, for he is the highest judicial authority in the land, and is a most important Member of the Party Government of the day; but the Lord Chairman is elected by a majority of the House to perform the duties of Chairman and is, in the main, chosen on similar lines to the Chairman in the other House. His position, therefore, is in no way comparable with that of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack; and I cannot, for the life of me, see why my noble friend should decline to accept this modest and simple proposition. If an Amendment is moved to delete the Lord Chancellor, I will gladly accept the Motion in that form.

The only reason that I can see for objecting to the Motion as restricted to the Lord Chairman is that to some reactionary minds this simple proposal may appear to be the thin end of the wedge which would eventually confer greater authority on the Chairman and transform him, if I may say so without disrespect, into a real chairman such as we know in other bodies. If that be the charge I stand here unabashed and unashamed, because that is the real reason why I have brought this proposal forward. It would be the germ from which would spring greater order, and in the end it would tend to the giving of greater authority to the Chairman, the simplification of our debates, and the general efficiency of our proceedings. It is in that spirit that I venture to commend this Motion to your Lordships. It is not a party question at all, and I hope that I have not been presumptuous in advocating it somewhat warmly. I am certain that no one will accuse me of having brought it forward with any other object than a deep-seated regard for the order and dignity of this great Assembly, of which I have the honour to be an humble member.

Moved, "That the following additional Rule be also made a Standing Order, viz: (4) It shall be the duty of the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman to point out to the House or to the Committee, as the case may be, any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."—(*Lord Burghclere.*)

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, although I do not claim to speak with the authority of many who are here present this afternoon, I trust that, having been a member of the Committee, I may be allowed to give at all events my partial support to the proposal made by the noble Lord opposite. At the same time I feel it my painful duty to comment upon the fact that the noble Lord himself, in his speech, was guilty of considerable irrelevancy—singularly inappropriate in the circumstances—because he devoted a large portion of his remarks to the question of the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman calling upon Members of this House, whereas there is nothing whatever in his Motion dealing with that particular point. My noble friend was formerly an ornament of the Front Bench in another place, and it is only natural that, in the circumstances, his orderly soul should occasionally be revolted and outraged by what he witnesses here. But, at the same time, I think he will be the first to admit that the circumstances of the two Assemblies are totally different.

All that my noble friend is doing on the present occasion, it seems to me with perfect justice, is this. He is asking that the original decision of the Committee should be adhered to. If my recollection serves me aright, the reason for the change of opinion on the part of the Committee was somewhat remarkable. The noble Lord, as he has told the House, originally proposed that this power should be given to the Chairman of Committees only. My noble friend the Lord Chairman protested strongly against that. He objected to being clothed with these additional powers, and represented his painful position in such powerful terms that eventually he persuaded the Committee that if he was going to be placed in this intolerable position it was only fair and just that the Lord Chancellor should be placed in that position also. Thereupon the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack appeared upon the scene, and he so wrought upon the feelings of the Committee that he persuaded a certain number of the members to change their minds upon the question. They reversed their decision, and, in accordance with the *præsumitur pro negante* practice, the Motion was defeated. The noble Lord, in my opinion, is perfectly justified in bringing it up again, and for my part I am disposed to give him my support and to vote for him if he will undertake to leave out the Lord Chancellor.

In spite of what has been said—not that I set myself in opposition to the pundits of this House—I venture to think that, in theory, there is no great difference between the position of those two functionaries, the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman. Both are Chairmen of this Assembly, and both receive salaries for discharging that particular office; but, in practice, I admit there is the greatest difference between their functions, and it seems to me we ought clearly to distinguish between them. In discussing this question, I cannot help thinking that it would be wrong to ignore what has been passing elsewhere. It is perfectly useless to try and conceal the fact that this House tends more and more to become the home of free discussion. Free discussion is being so largely suppressed in another place that this House will soon remain the sole refuge of free speech. When the House, as apart from Committee, is sitting, the necessity for the intervention of the Chair scarcely ever arises. Nothing offensive is ever said, and if, occasionally, slightly irrelevant speeches are made, there is always plenty of time at our disposal, and this disadvantage is more than counterbalanced by the advantage we enjoy of free discussion. But when we are in Committee the case is totally different.

I might cite as an objection to giving greater powers to the Lord Chancellor this fact. One of our privileges in this House, which, at all events, I prize most highly, is that of being entitled, when asking a Question, to make a speech upon almost anything that comes into one's head. I think a privilege of this kind is one which ought not to be lightly parted with. The opportunities of cross-examining Ministers and of finding out the intentions of the Government have been so greatly reduced that we should be extremely foolish if we parted with any of our privileges of free speech when the House is sitting. Therefore, I am averse to the proposal of my noble friend Lord Burghclere, so far as it applies to the Lord Chancellor. But in Committee there is no occasion for rhetorical display, and we ought to endeavour to get through our business in the most practical manner. Clearly the main thing to be aimed at in Committee is that the discussion should be confined to the merits of the particular Amendment before the Committee. It is in Committee, and in Committee only, that a certain weakness in the Standing Orders is apparent.

The noble Lord opposite cited the proceedings in Committee on the Education Bill of 1906 as an argument in favour of the course he now suggests. I must confess that of several incidents which took place during the discussion in Committee on that Bill I still retain the liveliest recollection. I have on more than one occasion known instances of noble Lords coming down to the House, and, after airily explaining that they had been detained elsewhere, possibly at Newmarket, delivering Second Reading speeches when the House was in Committee. I also remember occasions during the progress of the Committee stage of the Education Bill when several noble Lords were on their feet at once endeavouring to address the Committee. Occasions also arise when noble Lords read speeches, and I remember a noble Lord making a long speech upon the French Revolution in discussing an Amendment in connection with the Education Bill. I remember also an occasion when a right rev. Prelate intervened in a disorderly way to explain that he was not a man of wordly wisdom. Of course, it is possible to exaggerate these cases, but upon the whole they are not conducive to the dignity of the House.

I think anybody will admit that when a large number of persons are collected together discussing a complicated subject, they may under certain circumstances, if they have no definite guidance, develop into what I hope I may not too disrespectfully term a mob. It is no answer to say that any Member of this House has a right to call attention to the irrelevance of another Member. It is not by any means a pleasant task for a private Member to call attention to the fact that another noble Lord is not speaking to the point. At all events, it is not a thing which I should care to do. I should always feel that I ran the chance of making an enemy for life. But though this is not a pleasant task for an unofficial Member to discharge, nobody would ever dream of resenting being called to order by the Chairman, whose duty it would be to intervene in such a case. I will only add that I feel convinced that the mere knowledge that it was the duty of the Chairman to intervene would tend of itself to check irrelevance. If the noble Lord will delete from his Motion all reference to the Lord Chancellor, I will vote with him.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, I do not think this a very important issue or that the sky will fall whichever way it is determined. But I should like to say, for myself, that I hope that, as far as my office is concerned, the Motion will not be carried. Indeed, I am rather hopeful that it will not be carried, because the noble Lord who proposed it and the noble Lord who seconded both appeared to think, for one reason or another, that the Lord Chancellor ought not to be included in the Motion; and I am not sure that some of those reasons are not applicable also to the case of the Lord Chairman.

As a matter of fact, the Motion does impose the duty on the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman of calling attention to any transgression of the Rules of the House. At present there is no such duty. Therefore the Motion necessarily involves a change with regard to a matter of some delicacy. It would approximate my position to that of the Speaker of the House of Commons, and it would do so in regard to one of the functions of Mr. Speaker which I think is the most invidious of all his functions. There are obvious distinctions between the two positions. In the first place, the Speaker of the other House is elected, while the holder of my office is not elected. The Lord Chancellor is, I believe, according to the origin of the office, in a large degree a representative of the Sovereign in this House; and where he sits is not a part of the House. It is the case that several holders of the office of

Lord Chancellor have sat upon the Woolsack without being Members of this House at all. The Lord Chancellor is not, necessarily, even a Member of the House. Yet it is proposed to give him power to call Members to order.

In the next place, the Speaker of the other House is not a Member of the Government · he is elected to stand quite apart from party controversy; and those who, like myself, have been Members of the House of Commons know how implicitly the impartiality of the Speaker, no matter from which side of the House he is taken, can be relied upon, just as can that of a Judge. There is a most complete atmosphere of impartiality surrounding the Speakership, and no Speaker could remain for forty-eight hours in the Chair unless everybody in the House was persuaded as to his absolute impartiality. On the other hand the Lord Chancellor—though I hope, so far as I am concerned, it can be said that I am impartial in everything where that quality is required—is a Member of the Government, holding strong and definite political views, and it is difficult to reconcile that with a position similar to that of the Speaker of the other House.

The next difference is this, that according to the custom of the House of Commons the Speaker never takes part in debate. It is true that the Speaker used to do so until 150 or 160 years ago, and I believe there has been one occasion within the last forty or fifty years when the Speaker has been known to address the House of Commons upon a Private Bill concerning his own constituents. That was an exception. But the Lord Chancellor takes part in debate, and I think it would be invidious that one who had taken part in a debate should call to order a noble Lord who is answering him. That being so, I hope that it will not be considered necessary to include the Lord Chancellor in this Motion. Indeed, I doubt whether there is any necessity for the Motion at all. I question whether it is necessary to have any special provision to keep order in this House, where the atmosphere is tranquil and so different from that which prevails in another place. Why it is different we need not inquire; but it is a very different thing. I doubt myself whether the Motion is necessary at all. As to that necessity your Lordships are better judges than I, with my short experience, can be; but I deprecate being brought into the Motion.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: My Lords, as I was a Member of this Committee I should like to be allowed to say a few words. If my noble friend Lord Burghclere presses this matter to a division I shall support him, provided he makes the amendment suggested by Lord Newton and leaves the Lord Chancellor out of the Motion. I have never been a stern mentor for order. I have not understood order very well, but I confess I think that what Lord Burghclere proposes would be, for many reasons which have been ably argued, to our advantage. The Lord Chancellor made a point a moment ago of the Motion imposing a new duty upon the Lord Chairman. I do not shy from such a duty being imposed, for I think its imposition would tend to the general smooth conduct of our proceedings.

The noble Lord opposite, Lord Newton, referred to noble Lords making Second Reading speeches in Committee, and cited the instance of a noble Lord delivering an allocution on the French Revolution in speaking to an Amendment in Committee on the Education Bill. Mr. Gladstone always said that the difference between Questions in this House and Questions in the House of Commons was that Questions were asked in the other House in order to elicit information, while in your Lordships' House they were often asked for the purpose of conveying argument. I believe any one who has sat in the House of Lords as long as I have will admit that. You can put a Question of the most innocent form, concerning, say, the issue of stores to some battalion in a remote part of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and out of that Question you can convey an argument attacking the whole military administration of the Government. I do not mind that. I am all for it. This is a point we must keep before our minds, for if noble Lords who ask Questions are prohibited from stating their views on the subjects which they bring forward, the debates in this House will lose a great deal of interest although they may gain in absolute formality.

I think all the speakers who have addressed us to-night have recognised that the time when the proposed order should come into force is when we are in Committee. I do not wish to refer again to what took place in Committee on the Education Bill, but it did seem to me that the Chairman of Committees felt at that time that the Standing Orders enjoined upon him almost absolute neutrality. I do not at all blame the Chairman of Committees. I put the responsibility on the Standing Orders as they are; and I feel that it would be of advantage to have this proposed new Order in force in Committee. Apparently, everybody is agreed on both sides of the House on the subject of old-age pensions, temperance, and the maintenance of a suitable Army. It is only when the Bills are in Committee and it comes to a question of the application of those principles that a confusion of ideas, which nobody suspected, leaps to the front, and even in the tranquil atmosphere of this House a considerable amount of divergence of opinion arises. That is why I think this Standing Order should be adopted. I cannot see what harm its adoption could do to ourselves, to the dignity of this House, or to the susceptibilities of our Chairman, who is perfectly able to discharge this duty if given a chance. The Motion would tend to the general smooth conduct of our proceedings in Committee, and, if the reference to the Lord Chancellor is deleted, I shall give it my support.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: My Lords, I had not intended to take part in this discussion, but I was a member of the Committee to which this matter was referred and I cannot help thinking that it is possible the House may vote upon it on a somewhat false issue after having heard what fell from the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. The noble and learned Lord spoke of the inconvenience which he and the Lord Chairman might suffer if they were required to call Members of your Lordships' House to order. I entirely agree. I regard the fact that nobody can be called to order in this House except by the House as a most valuable privilege which we ought to maintain most jealously. I object personally to be called to order by any one except by the House itself. But that is not what is proposed.

What is proposed is that certain leading Members of this House—namely, the Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees—should regard it as part of their duty to call the attention of the House to that which appears to them to be out of order. The House would have a perfect right to say that they did not agree with the Lord Chancellor or the Chairman of Committees, or the House might say that, though the proceeding was irregular, for the convenience of debate they did not choose to check the irregularity. At present, the duty of calling the attention of the House to a breach of order lies indefinitely between a number of Peers. A noble Lord said to me just now that, in his opinion, the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition are the proper persons to call the attention of the House to an irregularity; but the Leaders of the House are very often too good natured to do so. I have known the late Lord Chancellor call the attention of the House on many occasions to irregularities, and I do not see why the wish of the House should not be expressed through, at any rate, the Chairman of Committees.

The noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack said just now that it was an invidious position to place him in because he was a member of a party. That is an argument which applies to almost every noble Lord in this House, at any rate to any noble Lord who is at all in a position to call the attention of the House to irregularities. I sincerely hope that this Resolution will be carried, at any rate so far as the Chairman of Committees is concerned; and although I should oppose it as strongly as any one if it gave the Lord Chairman power to call Members to order, I cannot see the slightest objection so long as it would only be his duty to call the attention of the House to that which appeared to him to be out of order.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, I think there is a general agreement among

Members of the House that the Resolution goes somewhat too far. The Lord Chancellor has appealed to us with regard to his position, and I am bound to say that I quite agree with the argument that when the whole House is sitting there is no great necessity for any one being given special powers in the matter of order. But I have often felt that the Chairman of Committees, if he is to conduct business properly when intricate Amendments are being moved, must take upon himself power of calling attention when Members are out of order. I, therefore, propose, as an Amendment to the Amendment, to leave out the words "the Lord Chancellor or," "House or to the," and "as the case may be," so that the Resolution should run—

"It shall be the duty of the Lord Chairman to point out to the Committee any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."

Amendment moved—

"That the following Rule be made a Standing Order, viz. :—'It shall be the duty of the Lord Chairman to point out to the Committee any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so.'"—(*Lord Belper.*)

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW (speaking from the Woolsack, which he had taken in the temporary absence of the Lord Chancellor): My Lords, perhaps I may be allowed to say a word or two, as the position of the Lord Chairman has been discussed. I have taken the trouble to look through the proceedings of this House for a number of years past to see what was the attitude adopted by my predecessors as Chairman of Committees, and I think I may say that, with one single exception, they have always been careful to say, when drawing the attention of the House to anything which, in their opinion, was irregular, that they had no greater power than that possessed by any other Member of your Lordships' House. There was only one occasion that I recollect when the late Lord Morley called a speaker to order. He heard the noble Lord who spoke last but one say, on rising to move an Amendment, that he felt very much inclined to make a Second Reading speech, and Lord Morley pointed out to him that as he was speaking to an Amendment it would not be in order to make a Second Reading speech. I think your Lordships on both sides of the House are very jealous of guarding the privilege which gives no one Member of the House any greater right to draw the attention of the House to the fact that anything is out of order than any other Peer. I confess that the present system has, so far as my experience has gone, worked admirably. I never recollect a case where any noble Lord drew attention to the fact that, in his opinion, a speaker was out of order, but that the speaker immediately took the hint and either sat down or addressed himself to the subject under discussion. I, for one, object to this Resolution being made a Standing Order of the House. There is a great deal of difference between what I may call a pious opinion and a Standing Order. A Standing Order is a very solemn thing, and if by Standing Order you direct the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman to call attention whenever he thinks a noble Lord is out of order, I venture to think that would be giving him a great deal more power than is possessed by any other Member of the House. The Lord Chancellor, a few moments ago, claimed, as I claim now, that having the right to speak and vote, which is not exercised by the Speaker or the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, we ought not to be in any different position from any other Member of your Lordships' House.

I am imbued with the same conservative spirit which influenced the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and, like him, I have no desire to see any alteration made in the Standing Orders of your Lordships' House in this direction. I do not admit that there is any necessity for such a step. In their Report the Select Committee draw attention to the position of the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman. The Committee say—

"It was considered likely that the House would welcome the exercise on suitable occasions, by both the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman, of the privilege which they possess in common with other Members of the House, of calling attention to breaches of order in debate."

The noble Lord who moved the Amendment now before the House said he thought it would be the germ from which might spring greater order in debate.

I think that germ is already contained in the important words I have just read to your Lordships. If it were made a Standing Order, a great deal more power would be given to the Lord Chairman than is possessed by any other Member of the House. I feel certain that an intimation from the House that, where the occasion is suitable, they will welcome attention being called, either by the Lord Chancellor or the Lord Chairman, to breaches of order in debate, will be quite sufficient to produce the most perfect order and regularity.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble Lord who moved this Amendment referred so frequently to me during the course of his speech that I feel almost bound to say a few words before our discussion comes to an end. What I desire to say is that my opinions are to be found in the Report which lies on the Table of your Lordship's House, and they are the opinions which have been expressed by the noble Earl who leads the House, by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, and by the Lord Chairman of Committees. The Committee which reported upon this subject was a strong and representative one. It approached the discussion of the question with an entirely open mind, and the conclusion, come to deliberately, was that, with the exception of the comparatively trifling changes which are specifically recommended, we might very well be content to leave matters as they are.

The noble Lord who moved the Amendment relied, in particular, upon an *obiter dictum* of mine to the effect that I could recollect no occasion on which the House had not been grateful for the guidance of the Lord Chancellor or the Chairman of Committees. It is because that is my impression that I now see no reason for altering our Standing Orders. I believe that the disposition of the House in this matter is of such a kind that without the formality of a Standing Order we do show ourselves ready to accept, whenever guidance is necessary, the sort of informal guidance we now receive from the Lord Chancellor and the noble Earl at the Table. There have been several references to what appears to be regarded as the leading case in favour of a far-reaching reform of our rules—I mean the moment of confusion through which this House passed on the occasion of the discussion, in Committee, of the Education Bill of 1906. It is perfectly true that on one evening during that discussion very considerable perplexity prevailed, and I hope my noble friend who presides over our Committees will not take it amiss when I say it is my impression that this perplexity was shared by him for the moment. At any rate, we emerged from that period of perplexity. We had no great difficulty in settling down to our work, and we got through it without any recurrence of the difficulty.

What weighs with me particularly in this matter is that the two high officials of the House who are most concerned have both told us that they are reluctant to have these new duties imposed upon them. The speech of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack was, if I may be permitted to say so, a most complete and convincing statement of the reasons why it would be highly improper that the occupant of the Woolsack should be placed in a position analogous to that of the Speaker of the House of Commons. I will not attempt to travel over the arguments which he used with such force. My noble friend Lord Onslow has also told the House that, in his opinion, the present arrangement works admirably. If that is so, then what reason is there that we should recast our Standing Orders in this particular? What the House has done this evening is this. It has accepted the Report of the Committee, and it has accepted, in particular, the statement contained in the opening paragraph, to the effect that—

> "The House would welcome the exercise on suitable occasions, by both the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chairman, of the privilege which they possess in common with other Members of the House, of calling attention to breaches of order in debate."

It seems to me that the House, by adopting this Report, has intimated most distinctly, both to the Lord Chancellor and to the Lord Chairman, that it is ready in the future to be guided, as it has been guided in the past, by their advice upon all occasions when advice is necessary. For these reasons, if the Amendment is pressed to a division I shall vote against it.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: The noble Marquess who has just spoken stated that we have already adopted the recommendations of the Select Committee. As I understand, the only Motion which was carried was that the Report of the Select Committee be considered.

THE EARL OF CREWE: And agreed to.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: I did not understand that.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: The noble Earl who leads the House moved, on sitting down, that the Report be agreed to. I therefore take that as an acceptance of the opening paragraph of the Report.

THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, I have very little to add to what I said in my opening remarks on this subject, all the more as I find myself in complete accord with what has just fallen from the noble Marquess opposite. It certainly does seem to me that those noble Lords who have supported the idea of the Lord Chairman being placed in this position do not quite realise that a duty imposed by Standing Order is a very serious matter. Every time that the noble Lord in the Chair did not call due attention to some breach of the rules, he would be himself committing a breach of the Standing Order and some other Member of the House would be doing right in calling attention to that fact. The ultimate result, I think, would undoubtedly be that the noble Lord would become the arbiter of these matters in debate.

If this right were conferred upon the Lord Chairman he would be perpetually referred to. The procedure in another place would be imitated by some noble Lord rising to order, and then the noble Lord in the Chair would give a direct decision upon it. Therefore he would slide into being the sole guardian of order in this House, which is not, I understand, the desire of those who support this position. And if this proposal is not carried, my noble friend Lord Burghclere can console himself that a great deal will have been done by his Committee in strengthening the hands of the Lord Chairman. It has been the case that in the past noble Lords who have held that position have taken a leading part in calling attention to breaches of order. The late Lord Redesdale, for example, if he did not regard calling other noble Lords to order as a duty, he certainly regarded it as a pleasure. The Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees have taken a leading part, which I hope they will always exercise, in calling attention to breaches of order; and I hope, therefore, the noble Lord will not press his Amendment.

LORD BURGHCLERE: My Lords, I merely rise to say that I accept the Amendment proposed by Lord Belper. I stated in my speech that that was my original intention, and that it was in that form that I moved the proposition in the Committee.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, I am very much in the hands of the House, but many noble Lords wish that the Amendment, in its limited scope, should be put to the vote. I would suggest that the Amendment should begin with the words, "When the House is in Committee." It only refers to proceedings in Committee, and I think it would be better to make that quite clear.

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: My Lords, I entirely concur with the observations made by the Lord Chancellor and the Chairman of Committees. If the duty had been cast upon me to control the order of debate and I had been on the Woolsack, I cannot help saying that I should have regarded the greater part of this discussion as absolutely out of order. This irregular Amendment, which ought to have been disallowed, indirectly attempts to rediscuss what the Committee themselves decided and made their Report upon, and to do so after the Report of the Committee has been agreed to. There is only one other observation I desire to make, and it has reference to the suggestion of the noble Duke. The noble

Duke suggested that the House would have a perfect right to say, when attention had been called to that which was out of order, that, though the proceeding was irregular, for the convenience of debate they did not choose to check it. That would be absolutely irregular. The noble Duke said the House did occasionally adopt that course. I can only say I have never heard of it. When attention is called to a breach of the Standing Orders, it is impossible for the House to say they will pass on without insisting on its being a breach of order. The Standing Orders must be repealed, or effect must be given to them. The doctrine laid down by the noble Duke is contrary to every principle on which debate should be conducted. If the Report of the Select Committee was intended to be taken to pieces and controverted, it ought to have been done before the Motion was put agreeing to the Report.

THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND: My Lords, I know I am out of order in speaking again, but I ask the indulgence of the House whilst I make an explanation. The noble and learned Earl who has just sat down, has, of course quite unintentionally, entirely misrepresented what I said. The proposal before the House is that the Chairman of Committees should call the attention of the House to irregularities. I have known instances in which Members of this House have risen and asked whether a certain noble Lord was not out of order, and the House has taken no further step upon it but passed it by. The proposed Standing Order is not that the Chairman of Committees should have power to call a Member to order. I quite agree that it would be impossible then for the House to allow the irregularity to pass. But the Motion is that the Lord Chairman should call the attention of the House to the fact that a noble Lord is out of order. I submit, with all deference to the noble and learned Earl, that I am right in saying that the House would be perfectly justified in paying no attention to a remark to this effect from the noble Lord in the Chair.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: I will now put the Amendment as amended.

On Question, "That the following Rule be made a Standing Order, viz.:—"It shall be the duty of the Lord Chairman when the House is in Committee to point out to the Committee any transgression of these rules, when, in his opinion, it is necessary to do so."

Their Lordships divided:—Contents, 15; Not-Contents, 55.

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EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

*THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY rose to call attention to a Draft Ordinance for regulating the sale of liquor in the East Africa Protectorate, and to ask for information. The most rev. Primate said : My Lords, I shall not detain your Lordships many minutes in calling attention to a matter which seems to me to be of some public importance, although it is one which lies rather outside the ordinary range of your Lordships' proceedings, and, possibly, of your knowledge. For that reason it might very easily escape attention ; yet I think it may turn out that grave results would follow from our not looking into the question now. If I understand the position aright, this Draft Ordinance is now in England with a view to its being decided by His Majesty's Government whether or not it is to receive such imprimatur as shall give it formal effect. This, therefore, is the last opportunity, I presume, that we shall have of calling attention to the matter before the Ordinance becomes law.

The matter is important in two directions—first, as regards the effect upon the European population, with regard to whom the Ordinance is especially drafted ; and, secondly, as regards the indirect effect on the sale of liquor to the native population. As everybody knows, there is in the East Africa Protectorate at this moment an increasing European population, and one likely to increase very largely before many years ; and therefore it is desirable, at the outset, to prevent arrangements growing up in regard to the sale of liquor which it may be found very difficult to alter afterwards. Now, if we take up the regulations in the Draft Ordinance dealing with the granting, and, above all, the renewal of licences, we find ourselves face to face with the very thing which in the Government's Licensing Bill now before Parliament is being dealt with, with a view to taking away what are universally regarded as irregularities or inexpediencies in the arrangements with which we are familiar in this country. Therefore, it is of the highest importance that the matter should be looked into, lest we should find, when it is too late, that mistakes have been made as regards the granting of monopolies and the creation of vested interests which in this country we are now trying to get rid of.

I ask the noble Earl whether he can assure us on that point, and whether he can explain how the proposals in this Ordinance can consistently be enacted alongside the Government's Licensing Bill, which aims at recovering for the State rights with which the State ought never to have parted, and getting rid of almost exactly similar irregularities, now regarded as detrimental to the public good. There are several other details in the Ordinance to which attention might be called. It is a rather striking fact that, according to the regulations laid down, the places for the sale of liquor, which are now open for only a reasonable number of hours, are, under the Ordinance, to be open for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, Sundays and week-days alike. Such a regulation is startling in itself, and still more startling if it be true, as I am informed, that in the earlier draft of the Ordinance the provisions were very different, and that the changes have all been such as to increase the laxity in regard to hours. I do not propose to go into these details, but I feel bound to ask whether these provisions are being thoroughly considered, and whether they are supposed to be in harmony with the general licensing policy adopted by His Majesty's Government nearer home. The whole question needs the utmost care, for those changes show the trend of opinion on the spot among those who are certainly under considerable temptations to stretch to the utmost the facilities for the encouragement of drinking habits.

The other point to which I wish to draw attention is that of the arrangements respecting the sale of liquor to natives. The sale of liquor to the natives is wholesomely prohibited under the Brussels Act, and remains prohibited under the Regulations as now drafted. If, however, I am not misinformed, the penalties set forth in the original Draft have been greatly relaxed. It is made a less serious matter than it was originally intended to be to commit that worst of all acts which could be committed by us in our dealings with the East African races—the facilitating of the sale of drink to the natives.

I would ask your Lordships to look at the Clauses of this Draft Ordinance which relate to that matter, and to compare them with what has gone before; and I would press His Majesty's Government to say whether they really think it is desirable that there should be a relaxation and not a stiffening of the obligations on the European population in this respect. There is a definite temptation to allow that sale to take place. It may be untrue but it is commonly reported that so great is the difficulty found in obtaining the forced labour required in the German part of East Africa, that, with a view to persuading them to work, recommendations have been made to the German authorities to give liquor to the natives. I do not know whether the statement is true or not, but it is evidence of the difficulties existing a little south of our own border. In our own Protectorate where we have no forced labour, there is an opinion current that some people are making every possible effort with a view to obtaining native labour more easily by offering the natives drink.

I have in my hand an extract from a newspaper—I do not necessarily attach great importance to such anonymous statements or counsels, but at least they show the current of opinion among some people in the matter. The extract runs—

> "Why should the blacks work? Their wants are few and their knowledge of luxuries nil. The present rate of wage enables the beggar to take six months holiday on receipt of a month's pay. Then why work overtime in this copyrighted climate where freezing or starving to death is beyond the range of possibility. Teach your nigger to gamble and boose, until such time as he fully realises the value of money and the power of Scotch whisky, then, and then only, will you find him willing to work six days in the week for the sake of getting drunk on Sunday. The above sounds ridiculous, but it is garnished with a percentage of wisdom and well worth a trial."

Whether that extract is serious or not, it expresses what is not infrequently said by European settlers who are angered by the non-industrial and perhaps lazy habits of the people. It is of vital importance, therefore, that we should do our best to prevent any restriction of the difficulties in the way of the sale of liquor to the native population. For the ultimate well-being of that population we may be in a large measure answerable. We have been commenting, in no uncertain way, in this House upon what we have observed and learned as to the treatment of natives in the Congo basin and down the banks of the Congo River. We ought to see to it that in the regulations which we are establishing on the other side of the continent and towards its eastern coast, we are free from responsibility, not only for those cruelties which have existed elsewhere, but also for anything which would be other than helpful and elevating to the races under our control. I hope the Government will be able to reassure the House as to the difficulties which seem to loom rather large in more directions than one.

*LORD HINDLIP: My Lords, I have not seen the Ordinance, but I am almost sure that the extract quoted by the right rev. Primate was a sarcastic reference to the Government Ordinance, and the same paper has pointedly referred to 300 licences being recently issued to native liquor vendors in one district. As one who is acquainted with East Africa, I merely rise to express the hope that the newspaper quotation which has been made will not be taken as representing public opinion in the Colony. Speaking from my experience as an employer of natives, I am quite certain that nobody who has ever employed them would be inclined to give them the slightest drop of liquor, but would, if possible, keep them away even from their own native beer. If you give the natives liquor it is hopeless to get any work out of them.

*THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I do not rise to say anything on the subject of the sale of liquor in the East Africa

Protectorate. But, as the Congo has been mentioned, I would take this opportunity of telling His Majesty's Government how pleased are those who are connected with the Congo Reform Association with the White Paper which has just been issued. I will not further allude to the matter, as I am desirous of not saying anything which will prevent negotiations now proceeding in Belgium being brought, as I hope, to a successful issue.

THE EARL OF CREWE: My Lords, the most rev. Primate was well within his rights in bringing forward this subject, which is one of no little interest and importance. He is quite correct in saying that the Draft Ordinance as it stands has been made the subject of some very pointed objections. We had the advantage at the Colonial Office of receiving the opinions on it of a gentleman singularly well qualified to speak on such a matter—Bishop Tucker of Uganda, who speaks with great authority on any subject concerning the social life of East Africa.

Having studied the Ordinance and read the criticisms which have been made upon it, I find myself in considerable agreement with some of those criticisms. The sale of liquor to natives in East Africa is, as everybody knows, already forbidden under Sections 90 and 92 of the Brussels Act of 1890. I will, accordingly, look carefully into the point raised by the most rev. Primate as to the penalties, and will consider whether it is necessary to make any alteration in them as they stand in the Ordinance. As regards the sale of liquor generally in East Africa, I fully appreciate the contention of the most rev. Primate that it would be exceedingly unwise of us to create a vested interest—a new monopoly value—in drink shops in East Africa. What we have to do is so to frame an Ordinance that it will induce a decent class of man to become licensed victuallers in those parts, and consequently the restrictions must not be too severe. At the same time, we do not at all want to create there the kind of vested interest which has sprung up here.

It has been urged that sufficient power is not reserved for the restriction of the number of licences. I think anybody who looks at Section 27 of the Ordinance will see that there is reserved to the Government quite sufficient power to limit the issue of licences in any particular district. But I propose, in suggesting Amendments to the Ordinance, to make it clear that the issue of every licence each year will be regarded as the issue of a new licence, which I think will meet the point raised by the most rev. Primate. I propose also to suggest that the hours of opening should be considerably shortened. I quite agree that eighteen hours a day are far too many, and I propose to make a recommendation to that effect. I also propose that public-houses should be open on Sundays for a limited number of hours only. It would not, I think, be possible to institute a system of Sunday closing, but the limitation of hours is a point upon which we feel quite as strongly as others who criticise the Ordinance.

Then, as regards the question of clubs, I propose to look carefully into it to see whether any of the risks which have been said to attach to the regulations as they stand are well founded; and, if so, I shall be quite prepared to modify those regulations. I will conclude by saying that I am very grateful to he most rev. Primate for having given me the opportunity of making this statement; and I hope the Ordinance will in due time be passed in such a manner as to be fair to those who deal in liquor in East Africa, and at the same time avoid risks of the kind we all deplore, either in the case of the white or the native population.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I should not like this discussion to close without recording the fact that we approve of the steps taken to suppress the sale of liquor to the natives in East Africa. We are internationally bound to do so, and I am quite sure that in that matter the Government will do their duty. I might offer a word of compassionate pity to the noble Earl in that he finds that liquor difficulties are not confined to this country. I am glad to find that he is sensible that it is necessary to make conditions sufficiently favourable to those who sell liquor in order to attract a good class of publican, and I hope that when we come to discuss another matter the same conviction will be present to the noble Earl's mind. I am afraid he will find, whether in England or in Africa, that it is impossible to issue licences without creating vested interests. Whatever the noble Earl may do with regard to new licences, vested interests will undoubtedly spring up, and are an essential and necessary complement of the restriction of licences. Upon the main question of the restriction of the sale of liquor to natives, there is but one opinion on both sides of the House.

ASSIZES AND QUARTER SESSIONS BILL. [H.L.]

House in Committee (according to Order).

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Clause 1.

Lord ALVERSTONE moved to amend the following proviso—

> Provided that the justices may, if they think fit, for the purpose of enabling any person committed for trial to have an early trial in case he is not admitted to bail, commit him for trial at any assizes or quarter sessions about to be held at any place or town convenient for the trial—

by inserting, after the words "enabling any person," the words "who would have been," and by inserting, after the words "committed for trial," the words "at any such assizes or quarter sessions." He explained that he had undertaken to insert these words at the instance of Lord Belper.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 4, after the word 'person' to insert the words 'who would have been' and after the word 'trial' to insert the words 'at any such assizes or quarter sessions.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Lord ALVERSTONE moved to delete the words—

"And the court of assize or quarter sessions to which any person is so committed shall have jurisdiction to try the case in all respects as if the offence in respect of which that person is committed for trial had been committed within the area for which those assizes or quarter sessions are held,"

and to insert in their place a provision from the Winter Assizes Act.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 7, to leave out from the word 'trial' to the end of line 11, and to insert the words 'and His Majesty may by Order in Council make such provisions as to the jurisdiction of the court, and the attendance, jurisdiction, authority, and duty of sheriffs, gaolers, officers, jurors, and persons, the use of any prison, the removal of prisoners, the alteration of any commissions, writs, precepts, indictments, recognisances, proceedings, and documents, the transmission of recognisances, inquisitions, and documents, and the expenses of prosecutors and witnesses, and of maintaining and removing prisoners, as seem necessary or expedient to carry into effect this provision.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Lord ALVERSTONE moved an Amendment to provide that the burden of the trial should be borne by the county or sessions to which the prisoner would in ordinary circumstances have been sent and not by the county to which he was actually sent under this clause.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 11, at the end of the line to insert the words 'but (*a*) the costs and expenses of any prosecutors and witnesses shall be paid by the council of the county or borough who would have been liable to pay those costs and expenses if the person had been committed for trial in the ordinary course; and (*b*) the council of the county or borough who would have paid the costs of the trial of the person if he had been committed in the ordinary course shall pay to the council of the county or borough by whom the costs of the assizes or quarter sessions to which he is committed under this provision are paid such sum, on account of his trial, as may be agreed upon between the councils, or in default of agreement, determined by the Secretary of State.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

Lord CLIFFORD of CHUDLEIGH said the provision in the clause might press hardly on the county to whose quarter sessions these prisoners were sent, as in some cases it might necessitate the holding of a second court or the extension of the sittings. Many of the counties were anxious that the burden of the additional expense under the Bill should not be borne by them.

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

LORD ALVERSTONE moved a further Amendment to Clause 1, providing that a warrant or recognisance to appear and give evidence issued in the case of a person charged with murder or manslaughter on a coroner's inquisition should, if the trial could not take place owing to the assizes to which the warrant or recognisance related not being held, continue in operation till the next assizes, or, if the person charged was committed to any other assizes by justices, such other assizes.

Amendment moved—

"In page 2, line 16, after the word 'circumstances,' to insert the following new subsection: (4) Any warrant for arresting or detaining any person, and any recognisance to appear and give evidence, or to appear for trial, issued or taken in the case of a person charged with murder or manslaughter on a coroner's inquisition, shall, if the trial of the person charged cannot take place in the ordinary course owing to assizes to which the warrant or recognisances relate not being held, by virtue of the provisions of this Act, continue in operation until the next assizes, or, if the person charged is committed to any other assizes by justices, such other assizes.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Verbal Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

LORD ALVERSTONE moved to insert a new clause.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 2, to insert the following new Clause: 'A court of quarter sessions for a county, or the justices of the county assembled at special meeting (which special meeting they are hereby authorised to hold) may at any time when it appears desirable, for any purpose, fix or alter the time for holding the next court of quarter sessions, so that the sessions be held not earlier than fourteen days before, nor later than fourteen days after, the week in which they would otherwise be held.'"—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Title amended, and Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended. (No. 105.)

House adjourned at ten minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 22nd June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan District Railway Bill [Lords]; Northern Assurance Company Bill [Lords]; Keighley Corporation Bill [Lords]; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PRIVATE BILLS (PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL PROVISION) (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for additional Provision in the following Bill, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz.:—Ards and Bangor Railways Bill.

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Lincoln Corporation Bill; North Eastern Railway Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Tyne Improvement Bill (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed.

Cardiff Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Widnes Corporation Bill (by Order).—Read the third time, and passed.

Tawe Valley Gas Bill [Lords] (changed from "Swansea Valley Gas Bill [Lords]") (by Order).—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill.—Read a second time; and ordered to be considered upon Wednesday.

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill (by Order).—Considered; to be read the third time upon Wednesday.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the County Borough of Belfast and the Urban District of Letterkenny." [Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 273.]

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from East Cannock, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Coedpoeth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions for alteration: From Great Yarmouth; and Sutton; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Axminster; Glasgow; Greenock; and Kilmarnock (two); to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Kilmarnock (two); and Kingston; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

METROPOLITAN POLICE (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Report of the Royal Commission upon the Duties of the Metropolitan Police, together with Appendices (Volume 1) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4000, 4003, and 4021–4026 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

POST OFFICE (FOREIGN AND COLONIAL POST).

Copy presented, of Foreign and Colonial Post Amendment (No. 1) Warrant, 1908, dated 28th May, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CIVIL SERVICES, 1908–1909 (SUPERANNUATION AND RETIRED ALLOWANCES).

Copy presented, of Appendix to the Estimate for Civil Services, Class 6, Vote 1, containing a list of Superannuation and Retired Allowances payable on 30th November, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

GOVERNMENT LABORATORY.

Copy presented, of Report of the Principal Chemist upon the work of the Government Laboratory for the year ended 31st March, 1908, with Appendices [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CIVIL SERVICES (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1908-1909).

Estimate presented, of the Further Amount required in the year ending 31st March, 1909, for Public Education (Ireland) [by Command]; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 186.]

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1908-1909.

Copy presented, of Revised Estimate, Class 7, Vote 4 (Ireland Development Grant) [by Command]; referred to the Committee of Supply, and to be printed. [No. 187.]

EAST INDIA (LOANS RAISED IN INDIA).

Copy presented, of Return of all Loans raised in India, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ending on 31st March, 1908, etc. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 188.]

TRANSVAAL.

Copy presented, of Statement of Mortality amongst the different classes of Coloured Labour in the Transvaal Mines from January, 1906, to February, 1908, inclusive [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Copy ordered, "of Comparative Statement showing (*a*) The amounts at present received by the Secondary Education Committee Districts from the sums which, under Clause 13 of the Education (Scotland) Bill, will constitute the Education (Scotland) Fund; (*b*) the distribution of the balance of the Fund, under Clause 14 (2) of the Bill, by two different methods."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 189.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Riding Masters and Quartermasters.

CAPTAIN WARING (Banffshire): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the duties hitherto performed by riding masters will in future be performed by combatant officers; and whether it is his intention also to abolish the post of quartermaster.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The duties hitherto performed by riding masters will be carried out by combatant officers. There is no intention of abolishing the post of quartermaster.

Combatant Commissions.

CAPTAIN WARING: To ask the Secretary of State for War how many combatant commissions have been granted from the ranks since January, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The number of combatant commissions so recommended and granted is forty-nine.

Staffs of Osborne and Devonport Colleges.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what are the number of instructors on the educational side, the number of officers on the disciplinary side exclusive of the above, the number of warrant and petty officers associated with the cadets in instructional work, and the number of cadets, with their average age, at the Royal naval colleges at Osborne and Dartmouth, respectively, the figures given to include all attached craft for instructional purposes.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I regret that it is not possible to make the distinction between educational and other work in the manner my hon. and gallant friend desired.

Assistant Inspectorships of Postmen at Glasgow.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that eight appointments of the rank of assistant inspector of postmen in Glasgow were granted under the recent revision; whether he will state when they will be filled up; and whether these appointments will be exclusively given to competent postmen.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Six new assistant inspectorships of postmen at Glasgow have been authorised under the recent revision, and the appointments will be made at as early a date as possible. It is usual for the class of assistant inspectors of postmen to be recruited from the ranks of the postmen, and I hope that none but competent men are ever selected.

Weekly Half Holiday at Sub-Post Offices in County Fermanagh.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General how many sub-post offices in the county Fermanagh have been allowed the weekly half-holiday recommended by the Report of the Hobhouse Committee; are the hours of attendance in these offices the same on Whit Monday as on other days, and were they kept open for the sale of stamps and telegraphic business on Whit Monday just as on any other week day; and will he make inquiries as to whether it would be possible to give employees in these offices the benefit of at least a half-holiday on bank holidays.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am making inquiries into the question of allowing a weekly half-holiday, and of reducing the attendance on bank holidays at sub-offices generally. The sub-offices in the county of Fermanagh will be included in this inquiry.

Recruiting Pamphlets in House of Commons Post Office.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the Postmaster-General whether, to facilitate the work of Members, who are frequently appealed to in reference to posts in the Army and Navy, he will arrange for copies of recruiting pamphlets for the Army and Navy being kept at the Post Office of the House of Commons.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I understand that hitherto there has been little or no demand at the House of Commons Post Office for recruiting pamphlets; but I have now had the present small stock supplemented to an extent which will, I hope, meet any demands from hon. Members.

Motor Cab Regulations.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the hinged emergency seat frequently fixed alongside the seat of the driver of a motor cab is a seat which conforms to the police regulations, and is one of the seats included in the licence, and if it is not included whether it is inconsistent with the provisions of the Home Secretary's order.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The Commissioner of Police informs me that no motor cab with a hinged seat alongside the driver has been licensed.

MR. COOPER: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, as he has stated he does not propose to direct the police to interfere with taximeter motor cabs carrying more passengers than their licensed numbers, he intends to withdraw that portion, Part 3, Sections 20 and 21, of the Home Secretary's Order made under The Hackney Carriage Act, 1869, and dated December, 1907, which makes it an offence for a driver to carry more passengers than a cab is licensed to carry, and making it also an offence for the proprietor of the cab if he is aware of the fact; and whether he will consider the advisability of altering the police regulations which require that cabs to carry more than two persons must be so constructed as to give four passengers inside a prescribed amount of room; and, if not, will he state his reasons.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) With regard to the first part of the Question I have nothing to add to the Answer I gave the hon. Member on 27th May, except to point out that he does not quote that Answer quite accurately. I did not say that I proposed to direct that the police should not interfere at all when more persons are carried in a motor cab than the vehicle is licensed for, but that such interference should be limited to cases of serious overcrowding. With regard to the second part, cabs being licensed either for two or four passengers, it seems to me reasonable that cabs licensed for four persons should be required to provide sufficient room inside for them. I may add that there are now a number of motor cabs licensed for four persons, and all two-seated motor cabs are being gradually altered so as to seat four.

Promotion of a Coffee Trust.

Sir WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the registration at Somerset House, with a capital of £52,500, of the State of San Paulo (Brazil) Pure Coffee Company; whether he is aware that the object of this company is to assist the operations of the present corner in coffee, with a view to the formation of a coffee trust; and whether he will consider the advisability of taking steps to prevent the employment for the furtherance of international gambling operations designed to raise the price of food commodities, of the facilities created by the Joint Stock Companies Acts for the encouragement of legitimate commercial enterprise.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I am informed that a company has recently been registered at Somerset House with the title of "State of San Paulo (Brazil) Pure Coffee Company, Limited." The objects for which the company is established are: (*a*) To promote and extend the consumption of coffee produced in the State of San Paulo, Brazil, and for this purpose to advertise such coffee in any way that may be thought advisable, including the issue of books and pamphlets; (*b*) to purchase, sell, and deal in coffee produced in the said State of San Paulo; (*c*) To plant, cultivate, and prepare coffee for market; (*d*) to promote and support legislation, and to use all other means tending to secure the greater purity of coffee offered for sale throughout the United Kingdom. I am not aware of any grounds on which registration of the company could be properly refused.

Publication of Annual Report of Inspector of Factories.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state when the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories is likely to be in the hands of Members.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I hope that the Report may be issued not later than the middle of July.

Death from Industrial Disease at Burslem.

Sir CHARLES W. DILKE: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to an inquest held at Burslem on Tuesday concerning the death of a man of twenty-three, employed for seven or eight years as a glost-placer, and to the statement of the foreman that the jury, whose verdict was that there was not sufficient evidence to show how kidney disease had been set up, considered that in cases of suspected lead-poisoning the post-mortem examination should be made by an independent medical man from outside the district; and whether he will consider the bearing of the case on the appointment of certifying surgeons.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have no detailed information as to this case at present, but I will make inquiries.

Accommodation for Staff at Billingsgate Post Office.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether increased rent has been paid at the Billingsgate branch office since 8th February, in order that the staff might have the benefit of a suitable dining-room; whether anything has yet been done towards providing this room; and, if not, whether he will give instructions for any necessary alterations in order that the staff may receive the benefit of the proposed dining-room.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) In connection with the settlement of the lease, it has been arranged as a compromise that rent shall be payable as from the 8th February. The fitting up of the new dining-room is in hand.

Potato Blight in Ireland.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether his attention has been called to the appearance of the potato blight in Ireland; and, if so, whether he can state the districts in which the blight has appeared and what steps, if any, are being taken to prevent it spreading.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The Department are aware that potato blight has appeared in the Belmullet union, and in Mallaranny and other localities in County Mayo. Notification has also been received of the appearance of this disease in the Clifden and Oughterard unions of County Galway, in the Glasson district of County Westmeath, the Ballymoe district of County Roscommon, and the Nenagh district of County Tipperary. The action which has already been taken by the Department to secure the more general use of spraying this season is as follows:—(1) Posters have been issued to every district in Ireland pointing out the need for early spraying and advising farmers to avoid delay in the purchase of spraying materials. (2) Over 200,000 copies of leaflet No. 14, containing full directions for spraying, have been printed, and these are being widely distributed in every district. (3) Samples of copper sulphate and washing soda are examined as to their suitability for spraying for a nominal fee of 3d. per sample. (4) County committees of agriculture have been authorised to purchase a number of knapsack sprayers to be hired out to farmers at a small fixed daily charge. (5) The county agricultural and horticultural instructors have been urged to give special attention to the subject of potato-spraying this season. (6) In districts where horse tillage is common, the Department are issuing loans for the purchase of approved horse-spraying machines to persons selected by county committees and who are prepared to spray their neighbours' potatoes at charges fixed by these committees. Since the beginning of the present month loans have been granted for the purchase of forty such machines. This is in addition to a large number sanctioned last year. (7) The special arrangements made in regard to the congested counties in the West of Ireland are as follows:—The Department employ twenty agricultural overseers, residing in these districts (this number will be increased within the next few days), whose duty it is: (*a*) To repair sprayers which are out of order; (*b*) to sell sprayers and spraying materials to farmers within certain limits of valuation; and (*c*) generally to do all in their power to encourage farmers to spray early and efficiently. Further, on the appearance of the disease in the Belmullet district, the Department issued a warning to farmers urging them to begin spraying immediately. This warning, through the courtesy of the Press, is appearing in all the Irish newspapers.

Purchase of Estate of J. T. Power at Ballingeary.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state when agreements to purchase in the case of the estate of James Talbot Power, situate at Ballingeary, County Cork, were lodged with the Estates Commissioners, and when the inspection of the estate is likely to take place; and, owing to the manner in which a sub-tenant is being treated by a tenant purchaser on this estate, will he use his influence to have the sale completed at as early a date as possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The purchase agreements in respect of this estate were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in August, 1906. The estate will be dealt with in its order of priority, but the Commissioners cannot at present say when its turn for inspection is likely to be reached. It would not, the Commissioners inform me, be possible for them to take up a case out of its proper turn on account of a dispute between a tenant and his sub-tenant.

MR. SHEEHAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that John Creedan, a tenant on the estate of James Talbot

Power, of Illaninagh, Ballingeary, which has been filed with the Estates Commissioners for purchase, has on two occasions processed his sub-tenant, Jeremiah Sheehan, for rent, although the latter on both occasions offered him the rent, less the same reduction Creedan was obtaining himself under the purchase arrangement; is he aware that the refusal of tenant purchasers to grant their sub-tenants equivalent reductions to those obtained by themselves, pending inspection of estates by the Estates Commissioners, has created considerable discontent and dissatisfaction in all parts of the county amongst this particular class; that county court proceedings have been taken, evictions threatened, and considerable bad feeling created in several districts; and, seeing that the present position of sub-tenants in regard to purchase is in such an unsatisfactory state, will he state whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce improved legislation on their behalf in connection with the amending Land Bill promised in the present session.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that, in the purchase agreement signed by John Creedan, Jeremiah Sheehan is returned as holding a sub-tenancy of two and a quarter acres, and the question of this sub-tenancy will be duly inquired into and considered by the Commissioners before the sale is completed. The Commissioners have no knowledge of any proceedings by the tenant against the sub-tenant. The point raised in the hon. Member's Question will, however, be noted for consideration when legislation for amending the Land Acts is being undertaken.

New Irish Universities Senates—Representation of Primary Schools.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received any communications from public bodies in Ireland requesting to have some representatives of Irish primary schools placed on the governing bodies of the proposed new Universities; and whether, in view of the dissatisfaction which the omission has caused, he is now prepared to consider the appointment of such representatives.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) My right hon. friend has received some communications to the effect mentioned in the Question, but, as he has already informed the hon. Member, he does not propose to add to the number of members of the governing bodies in the manner suggested in the Question. He has no doubt that the interests of primary education, in so far as they are affected, will be quite safe in the hands of the gentlemen who are to compose these bodies.

Irish Outrages and Cattle-Driving.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to cases of cattle-driving on the estate of Mr. F. C. B Trench, in East Galway; whether he is aware of the object of these occurrences; and whether any effective steps have been taken to protect the tenants on the property from similar loss and annoyance in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) On 12th May a party of about 100 men drove the cattle off a grazing farm on this estate occupied by Mr. J. D. Kelly. Two policemen were present, but were unable to prevent the drive. The cattle were driven in the direction of the owner's residence, but by the time that place was reached the police were reinforced and sixty-seven men were arrested. These persons were subsequently bound over with sureties to keep the peace. The cattle were replaced on the farm and have not since been interfered with. The police are taking all possible precautions to prevent a repetition of the cattle-driving if such should be attempted.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the number of outrages in Ireland recorded as agrarian and non-agrarian, respectively, in which firearms were used, during the six months ended 30th June and 31st December, 1906 and 1907, and during the period of five months ended 31st May, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The numbers are as follows:—In the first half of 1906, agrarian 12, non-agrarian 21; in the second half of 1906, agrarian 7, non-agrarian 17; in the first half of 1907, agrarian 34, non-agrarian 22; in the second half of 1907, agrarian 28, non-agrarian 33; in the five months ending 31st May, 1908, agrarian 76, non-agrarian 28.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is the practice, when designating an outrage as one of firing at or into a dwelling, to record the occurrence as a single outrage only of this character, notwithstanding that more than one shot may have been fired on the occasion; and, if so, will he state the number of outrages reported during the past six months in which shots to the number of two and more, five and more, ten and more, and twenty and more, respectively, were fired on the occasion of each such outrage.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The practice of the constabulary authorities is correctly stated in the first part of the Question. The great majority of the cases of firing into or near dwelling-houses are cases of intimidation and not of attempt to do bodily injury, and in such cases the firing of two or more shots on the same occasion is regarded as constituting a single offence. The Inspector-General informs me that two shots are not infrequently fired on the same occasion, and sometimes four or five, but very rarely more. To give the number of shots reported to have been fired in each case would involve laborious investigation by the police authorities, and, as no useful purpose would be served by the preparation of such a Return, it is not proposed to ask for it.

Extra Police in Irish Disturbed Districts.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the number of additional police at present serving in each of the Counties of Clare, King's, Galway, Leitrim, Longford, and Roscommon, which were declared by proclamation of the Lord-Lieutenant and Privy Council, dated 27th August, 1907, to be in a state of disturbance and to require additional police establishments; whether there are extra forces of police at present stationed in other counties; and, if so, will he specify the districts in which they are serving, and the strength of each such detachment.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The additional police forces at present serving in the counties named are as follows:—Clare, 1 head constable and 56 men; Galway, 2 head constables and 335 men. King's County, 24 men; Leitrim, 19; Longford, 21; and Roscommon, 2 head constables and 120 men; the totals being 5 head constables and 575 men. Extra police forces are also serving in two other counties. In Meath there are 32 men, of whom there are in the district of Dunshaughlin, 10; Kells, 8; Navan, 3; Slane, 2; and Trim, 9. In Westmeath there are 45 men, namely, in Athlone district, 5; Castlepollard, 17; Moate, 6; and Mullingar, 17.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the existing strength of the police force at the Phœnix Park depot; what proportion of this force is efficient and available for duty in the country should it be considered necessary to further augment local establishments; whether the 400 men by which the force generally was supplemented in consequence of the proclamations of the Lord-Lieutenant and Privy Council, dated 27th August, 1907, have all been recruited; and whether it is proposed to re-open recruiting for the force, and, if so, to what extent.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) The existing strength of the force at the constabulary depot is 590 men, of whom 313 are recruits. About 160 men are immediately available for services in counties, and further numbers will become available according as recruits complete their training and become effective for duty. The 400 men referred to in the Question have all been recruited, and it is intended to recruit 350 additional men.

Dublin Metropolitan Police Inquiry.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.); To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the terms of reference to the Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Dublin metropolitan police have yet been settled; and, if not, when he hopes to be in a position to announce them.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if Sir David Harrel, late Under-Secretary for Ireland, has been asked to accept and has accepted the position of chairman of the proposed Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Dublin Metropolitan Police; and whether, in view of the fact that Sir David Harrel is the father of Mr. W. V. Harrel, Assistant Commissioner of Police, who acts as Commissioner in the absence of Colonel Sir John Ross, of Bladensburg, he will reconsider the propriety of selecting him to act as chairman where necessarily the official conduct of his son will be the subject of investigation.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) Matters have not reached a stage at which it is possible either to state the terms of reference to the proposed Committee or to give the names of the gentlemen who will constitute the Committee. It is not possible therefore to designate the chairman at present, but I may add that no question of official conduct can come before the proposed Committee, which will deal exclusively with the cost of the Dublin Metropolitan Police.

Firing of Heavy Guns at Arbroath.

MR. ROBERT HARCOURT (Montrose Burghs): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the firing of heavy guns on His Majesty's ships in the vicinity of Arbroath has recently been the cause of considerable discomfort to the inhabitants of that place by seriously shaking doors and windows; and whether he will endeavour to see that this annoyance is removed or minimised in the future.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Representations have been received on the subject. The number of places where suitable ranges can be found is limited, and it is not practicable in all cases to ensure that no inconvenience shall be experienced; but every endeavour is made by the commanding officers of His Majesty's ships to carry out firing practice so as to cause the least possible annoyance.

Australian Contribution to Navy.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is yet in a position to make a statement to the House as to the results of the communications which have passed between the Admiralty and the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on the subject of the Australian naval contribution and forces, or whether Papers can be laid.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There is nothing to add to the statement made in reply to the Question of the hon. Member for East Clare on 21st May, except that the Admiralty are inquiring into the conditions under which a scheme, such as that proposed by Mr. Deakin, might be carried into effect, having regard to the requirements of the Royal Navy.

Cape Naval Volunteers.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Cape Government have given notice of their intention to disband the Cape Naval Volunteers on the 30th of the present month; whether any communications have passed between the Cape Government and the Admiralty on the subject, and, if so, whether he can indicate their nature; and whether the Admiralty has taken or will take any steps, in connection with the Cape naval subsidy or otherwise, to provide in conjunction with the Cape Government for the continuation and development of this branch of the Royal Naval Reserves.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Communications on the subject referred to have passed between the Cape Government and the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Admiralty have expressed their readiness, as far as possible, to meet the views of the Cape Ministers in regard to the maintenance of the Cape Naval Volunteers. The final decision of the Cape Government has not been notified, but there is reason to believe that it will be found possible to continue to maintain the force.

Armoured Vessels—Protection against Torpedoes.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state the names of any large armoured vessels which are now building in which the armament for the protection of the ship against torpedo craft consists of 3-pounder guns; whether in the "Invincible" class, about to be commissioned, 25-pounder guns are provided for this purpose; and what is the reason for these wide variations.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There are no large armoured vessels now building in which the armament for the protection of the ship against torpedo craft consists of 3-pounder guns. In the "Invincible" class 25-pounder guns are provided. The reasons for the difference in calibre of anti-torpedo-boat guns may be briefly stated as follows: that whereas the 3-pounder is adequate from its rapidity of fire and accuracy of aim to provide efficiently against torpedo attack, yet, where larger guns can be conveniently carried, it is considered advantageous to have the greater damaging effect of the increased calibre.

Yeomanry Re-enlistment for One Year.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH (Strand, Westminster): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether yeomen who finish their period of service next year will be allowed to re-enlist for one year, or whether they must re-enlist for four years.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Yeomen transferring into the Territorial Force whose period of service concludes next year will be allowed to re-engage with the consent of their commanding officers for a period to be prescribed by the County Association, which will not be less than one or more than four years.

Yeomanry Training.

MR. W. F. D. SMITH: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Yeomanry regiments will be allowed to continue the general practice of performing the necessary squadron drills in camp, and so extending the time in camp to eighteen days; and whether, if this is permitted, the non-commissioned officers and men will receive the pay and allowances of their rank for the whole of the eighteen days.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The Yeomanry will be allowed to perform their squadron drills for three days before the camp training. No pay will normally be given to officers or men for drills so performed, but non-commissioned officers and men who retain their old rates and conditions of pay will receive pay as under the old Regulations, as laid down in Paragraphs 2 and 3, Part II., Army Order, 18th March, 1908.

Payment of Money Witheld from John Gillen, late of Royal Irish Regiment.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that John Gillen, whose regimental number was 999, 6th Company, 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment, who was discharged at Chelsea in 1885 for disease of the heart contracted during service in India, and who is now living in great destitution at Longford, was owed a sum of 19 rupees, 4 annas, and 3 pice at the time of his discharge; and will he direct that this sum be paid to him, with interest, for the twenty-three years during which it has been withheld, so as to relieve him in his necessity in his old age.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) As I explained to the hon. Member in reply to a similar Question in February last year, nothing is known of the matter referred to, nor could any such claim be inquired into after a lapse of twenty-three years.

Vaccination of Territorial Force.

SIR FRANCIS LOWE (Birmingham, Edgbaston): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the exemption from compulsory vaccination and re-vaccination allowed in the case of members of the

Volunteer Forces will be extended to members of the Territorial Forces.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether any regulations are in force in reference to the vaccination of officers and men of the Territorial Army; and whether exemption is granted to those who object to the operation.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There are no regulations enforcing the vaccination of officers and men of the Territorial Forces.

Volunteer Long Service Decoration.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, under Army Order 129, all Volunteers serving on 31st March, 1908, who do not sign on for the Territorial Force will be eligible for the long service decoration if they have completed sixteen years service, while if they do sign on they will receive the efficiency medal only, and not the long service decoration; and, if this arrangement is not intended to penalise Volunteers who do join the Territorial Force, will he make the matter plain to the number of Volunteers who are construing the order in that sense.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) There is no intention of penalising Volunteers who join the Territorial Force. The efficiency medal will be granted, not for mere length of service, but for efficiency, and it will be of equal distinction to that of the Volunteer long service medal.

Railway Servants.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the total number and the numbers of the respective classes of railway servants employed in 1907 on the same basis as the figures given in the last column of Table X., page 30, of the Return of Accidents for the three months ending 31st December, 1907 [Cd. 4099].

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The accompanying table gives the information asked for—

Statement of the numbers of persons employed on 31st December, 1907, by the railway companies of the United Kingdom.

Nature of employment.	Number of persons employed.
1. Brakesmen -	(*See* Guards (goods)
2. Capstan-men and capstan-lads:	
(*a*) Men - - -	1,543
(*b*) Boys* - - -	285
3. Carmen and van-guards †:	
(*a*) Men - - -	17,672
(*b*) Boys* - - -	6,584
4. Carriage cleaners:	
(*a*) Men - - -	6,571
(*b*) Boys* - - -	312
5. Carriage and waggon examiners - -	3,837
6. Checkers:	
(*a*) Men - - -	8,607
(*b*) Boys* - - -	122
7. Chockers, chain-boys, and slippers:	
(*a*) Men - - -	90
(*b*) Boys* - - -	487
8. Clerks:	
(*a*) Men and women -	58,503
(*b*) Boys and girls* -	10,672
9. Engine cleaners:	
(*a*) Men - - -	16,350
(*b*) Boys* - - -	5,098
10. Engine drivers and motormen - - -	28,141
11. Firemen - - - -	25,714
12. Gate-keepers - - -	3,491
13. Greasers:	
(*a*) Men - - -	978
(*b*) Boys* - - -	629
14. Guards (goods) and brakesmen - -	16,786
15. Guards (passenger)‡ -	8,474
16. Horse-drivers (shunting) -	2,281
17. Inspectors:	
(*a*) Permanent way -	1,145
(*b*) Others - - -	8,084

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*Persons under eighteen years of age.

† Including draymen, lurrymen, etc., but not including bus-drivers.

‡ Including conductors and gatemen on electric trains.

18. Labourers :	
(*a*) Men	58,452
(*b*) Boys*	1,360
19. Lamp-men and lamp-lads :	
(*a*) Men	1,751
(*b*) Boys*	606
20. Loaders and sheeters	4,339
21. Mechanics and artisans :	
(*a*) Men	83,593
(*b*) Boys*	10,204
22. Messengers	
(*a*) Men	943
(*b*) Boys*	2,592
23. Number takers :	
(*a*) Men	1,045
(*b*) Boys*	754
24. Permanent-way men	67,184
25. Pointsmen	745
26. Policemen	2,127
27. Porters :	
(*a*) Men	51,707
(*b*) Boys*	4,695
28. Shunters (including marshalmen)	13,158
29. Signal fitters and telegraph wiremen	4,198
30. Signalmen	28,658
31. Signal-box lads	1,986
32. Station masters	8,688
33. Ticket collectors and examiners	4,163
34. Watchmen	1,150
35. Yardsmen	1,804
36. Miscellaneous :	
(*a*) Adults	30,849
(*b*) Boys*	2,134
Total	621,341

Port of London Bill—Exemption from Tonnage Duties of Barges under 100 Tons Register.

Mr. E. H. LAMB (Rochester) : To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will give an assurance that nothing in the Port of London Bill, as introduced, will affect the exemption from duties of tonnage of barges of under 100 tons register contained in the proviso to Section 7 of the Thames Conservancy Act, 1905, and that it is not his intention to accept any amendment that would have such effect.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) There appears to be nothing in the Bill which will affect the exemption referred to, nor am I aware that any Amendment which would have such effect has been suggested. As at present advised I see no reason for accepting such a proposal, if put forward.

Thames Conservancy Dues.

Mr. E. H. LAMB : To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether an assurance was given that the dues imposed by Section 7 of the Thames Conservancy Act, 1905, were only temporary ; and, if so, whether he intends to adhere to the proviso contained in the Port of London Bill as introduced making them permanent.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I am not aware of any assurance having been given on the subject, but as a matter of fact the power given to levy the increased tonnage dues is by the Act limited to a period of three years from 1st January, 1906. The Thames Conservancy have introduced a Bill by which it is proposed that the power to levy these increased tonnage dues should be permanent ; and, having regard to the great importance of the port authority having sufficient funds to maintain and improve the navigation of the river, it seems to me desirable that they should have the same power conferred upon them.

Definition of Non-Fatal Accidents to Railway Servants.

Mr. ELLIS : To ask the President of the Board of Trade what are the terms of the Board of Trade's Order of December, 1906, which has modified the definition of non-fatal accidents to railway servants, and in what respect has it modified the figures given in his reply to the Question of the hon. Member for Rushcliffe on 15th June.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The Order of 21st December, 1906, requires non-fatal accidents to railway servants to be reported whenever they are such as to cause the person injured to be absent from his ordinary work for a whole day at any time. In the previous Order the criterion was absence preventing five hours work on any one of the three days following the accident. Under the present system practically all the accidents previously reportable are included, with the addition of those in which the injury only causes cessation of work after three days or more. Further, the greater simplicity of the definition no doubt ensures more regular reporting. For these reasons it is believed that a larger percentage of the slighter accidents is now reported than formerly, but it is not possible to estimate what this increase amounts to.

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* Persons under eighteen years of age.

Suicide of a Trimmer on the S.S. "Oruba."

Mr. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his Department has received any report with regard to the death of a trimmer on board of the Orient Line s.s. "Oruba"; whether he is aware that this man became overheated in the stokehole and jumped overboard; if he will cause inquiries to be made as to the number of hours the trimmer was employed in the bunkers; whether he can state the consumption of coal on the vessel and the number of men employed; and whether at the time of the occurrence the men were working coal in excess of the 2½ tons per man for each twenty-four hours.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I have received reports from the Vice-Consul at Naples, the Superintendent of the Mercantile Marine office at Tilbury, and the principal Board of Trade officer for London, respecting the occurrence referred to by my hon. friend. I am informed that the trimmer, George Laws, left the stokehold after three hours on duty to get a can of tea, and as he was not afterwards seen it is presumed he jumped overboard. It was his first voyage, but he had made no complaint, and the trimmer who had been working with him observed nothing unusual in his condition or manner. The usual duration of watch for trimmers on board the "Oruba" was four hours on and eight hours off, but owing to the sickness of one of the men two of the others worked two hours extra every fifth watch. The consumption of coal was 86 to 90 tons per day, and the number of firemen and trimmers was thirty-six, so that, assuming the men were all effective, the coal worked per man would not exceed 2½ tons for each twenty-four hours.

Revision of Belfast Telegraph Establishment.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether a revision of the telegraph establishment at Belfast is under consideration; whether a reduction in the number of telegraphists, and in the classes above, is proposed; and whether he will be prepared to receive representations from the local branch of the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association before coming to a decision in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) A revision of the telegraph establishment at Belfast is under consideration. In the meantime I am unable to furnish any details; but the force will, as usual, be adjusted to the requirements of the work. I am prepared to receive any representation on the subject which the Postal Telegraph Clerks' Association may wish to furnish in writing.

Supplementary Courses in Scottish Schools.

Mr. MASSIE (Wiltshire, Cricklade): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the number of school departments in Scotland in which there are supplementary courses under Article 21 of the Code, the number of scholars taking such courses, and what percentage these are of the total number of scholars in public elementary schools.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The number of schools in Scotland in which there are supplementary courses under Article 21 of the Code is 1,721. The number of scholars taking such courses is 37,171, representing 4·58 per cent. of the total number of scholars (811,000) in primary schools.

Unemployed Fund Grants.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will give a list of the towns that received donations from the unemployed fund of £200,000, with the amount received by each; and will he say how much in each case was subscribed voluntarily in these towns or boroughs, and how much of the £200,000 was ultimately handed back to the Treasury.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The total amount distributed to the local authorities under the Unemployed Workmen Act in the United Kingdom during the financial year 1907–8 was £148,143. Of this sum the amount distributed in England and Wales was £124,195, in Scotland £19,448, and in Ireland £4,500. The following table shows the sums paid to the Central (Unemployed) Body for London and to distress committees in England and Wales. I am only concerned with these:—

	£
London - - -	61,993
Birmingham - -	400
Brighton - - -	550
Bristol - - -	1,100
Croydon - - -	700
Devonport - - -	300
East Ham - - -	6,220
Edmonton - - -	3,977
Erith - - - -	1,252
Great Yarmouth -	300
Hastings - - -	350
Kettering - - -	100
Kingston-upon-Hull -	813
Leeds - - - -	1,300
Leicester - - -	1,000
Leyton - - -	2,125
Liverpool - - -	700
Middlesbrough - -	300
Newcastle-upon-Tyne -	1,392
Northampton - -	300
Norwich - - -	1,750
Plymouth - - -	1,200
Reading - - -	444
South Shields - -	734
Sunderland - -	6,500
Tottenham - - -	4,046
Walthamstow - -	2,250
West Ham - - -	20,636
Willesden - - -	1,148
Wolverhampton -	315
	124,195

The amounts of the voluntary contributions shown in the returns I have received from the bodies mentioned above are as follows:—

	£
London - - -	572
Birmingham - -	246
Brighton - - -	700
Bristol - - -	780
Croydon - - -	558
East Ham - - -	102
Hastings - - -	961
Kettering - - -	43
Liverpool - - -	402
Northampton - -	3
Norwich - - -	855
Plymouth - - -	350
Reading - - -	500
West Ham - - -	630
Willesden - - -	32
Wolverhampton -	150
	6,884

Salaries of Customs Second-Class Examining Officers.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that there has been no revision of the salaries of second-class examining officers of Customs since the class was formed in the year 1876, although since that time extra duties, involving what the present Secretary of State for War, when Financial Secretary to the Treasury, described as great responsibilities, have devolved upon them; whether he is aware that it takes from twenty-two to twenty-seven years service for the majority of these officers to reach a salary of £200 a year, whereas clerks in the same department whose duties are no more responsible receive a salary of £200 a year after six years service; whether these officers are responsible for assessing and securing public funds amounting to nearly £30,000,000 per annum; whether the Board of Customs practically agreed at the end of last year to grant these officers an addition to their salary and a service scale of pay up to £300, but withdrew their proposals on account of the projected amalgamation of the Customs and Excise services; and whether, in connection with the amalgamation of these services, he will take steps to secure to these officers the increased salary and service scale of pay which it was practically agreed to give them at the end of last year.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) This subject was dealt with by me both in a reply which I gave to the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division of Liverpool on the 13th ultimo, and also in the recent discussion on the Customs Vote. I am afraid I have nothing to add to my remarks on these occasions to which I must refer the hon. Member.

Rights of the Kathiawar Chiefs.

MR. E. H. LAMB: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether, in a letter to the Government dated 15th March, 1807, Colonel Walker stated that the settlement he was undertaking would leave the chiefs in possession of all the rights of internal sovereignty to which they are entitled; and whether Government letter No. 549, dated 19th February, 1831, addressed to the Political Commissioner for Gujarat, states that Colonel Walker in an address to Native Chiefs proclaimed that no encroachment on their landed rights or their independence was contemplated, and that the state of possession and power as it then existed was to be guaranteed; and, if so, whether His Majesty's Government is still bound by such guarantees.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The first letter cited contains the statement referred to, and a letter of 19th April (not February), 1831, contains a statement identical with that set forth in the second part of the Question. These letters had reference only to the Kathiawar Chiefs, and the guarantees given in them are still recognised by the Government as binding.

Holdings for Evicted Tenants on the Annaly Estate.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on the 24th instant there will be offered for sale the freehold farm of Lisduff, parish of Rathcline, consisting of 35 acres, the property of the late George M. Davys, which would, if purchased by the Estates Commissioners, find equivalent holdings for Joseph Mulooly and Bridget Mulooly, evicted tenants on the Annaly estate, who have not yet been provided for either by reinstatement or equivalent holdings; and will he direct the immediate attention of the Estates Commissioners to this sale and ask them to communicate with Sir Augustine Baker, who has charge of the sale, with a view to its purchase for the benefit of these tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application of Bridget and Joseph Mulooly for reinstatement in a holding which was purchased in 1898 by the present occupier under the Land Purchase Acts. The Commissioners cannot procure the restoration of the applicants to the former holding; nor, having regard to the considerable extent of land at present occupied by them, do the Commissioners consider it necessary to take any steps to procure additional land for them.

Distribution of Untenanted Land at Ballygarive.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there are 101 acres of untenanted lands in the townland of Ballygarive, North Longford, to portions of which John Gavin, of Creeve, and Bridget Hughes, of Ballygarive, claim to be restored; whether he is aware that the lands in question have up to recently been let on the eleven months system, and are at present only half stocked; and will he request the Estates Commissioners to communicate with the owner, Mr. Frederick W. Russell, Lisanode, Moate, County Westmeath, with a view to a sale and distribution of these lands amongst the persons or their descendants who were evicted from them.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The holding in which John Gavin seeks reinstatement was formerly occupied by his wife's uncle, since deceased, and, having regard to the remote relationship between the applicant and the former tenant, the Commissioners do not intend to take any action in the matter. The Commissioners have not received an application from Bridget Hughes.

Evicted Tenant—Case of John Reilly, of Granard.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the case of John Reilly, of Granard, who was evicted from the lands of Derranagin, near Newtowngore, County Leitrim, in 1882; whether he is aware that this evicted tenant was examined by an inspector at Ballinamore, County Leitrim, some months ago with a view to his reinstatement, or, failing reinstatement, to his getting an equivalent holding elsewhere; and will he state what was the report of the inspector, and whether it is intended to give Mr. Reilly an equivalent holding or restore him to the farm from which he was evicted in 1882.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application of John Reilly, and, having regard to the comfortable circumstances of the applicant and to the fact that the evicted holding is in the occupation of a tenant, the Commissioners have decided to take no action in the matter.

Purchase of Estate of Mrs. Shirley Ball.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state whether any negotiations have yet been opened by the Estates Commissioners with Mrs. Shirley Ball or her agent, Mr. T. N. Edgeworth, for the purchase of the estate situate at Abbeylara, County Longford, including the untenanted lands of Toneymore on said estate; and, if not, will he request them now to undertake such negotiations.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) No proceedings have yet been instituted for the sale of the tenanted portion of this estate, and the Estates Commissioners do not consider that anything would be gained by their acquiring the untenanted land unless the holdings were being sold at the same time. The untenanted land could not be dealt with apart from the small holdings on and adjacent to the estate.

Amalgamation of Irish Schools—Grant for Assistant.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if, in the case of two separate boys' and girls' schools being amalgamated, and the principal of the girls' school is retained as assistant, grants for such assistant are available, though the average attendance is below fifty.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The answer is in the affirmative.

Re-sales under Section 3, Irish Land Act.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say how many re-sales of demesne to owners, under Section 3 of the Irish Land Act, 1903, have taken place; what is the amount of advances made in respect of these re-sales, and what is the amount of advances applied for up to 31st May, 1908; are these transactions dealt with in all respects such as priority, etc., the same as other resales under the Irish Land Act of 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that ninety-one re-sales of demesnes to owners under Section 3 of the Irish Land Act, 1903, have taken place. The advances made amount to £531,379; and further advances amounting to £49,252 for the purchase of thirteen demesnes have been applied for. The resales of demesnes to owners are dealt with as part of the sale of the estate and in the same order of priority.

Labourers Act Inquiry at Lisnaskea.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say when the last inquiry under the Labourers Acts (Ireland) was held in the Lisnaskea Union, County Fermanagh, stating what was the result of the inquiry; are there any representations for cottages, allotments, etc., now lodged with the clerk of this union; and, if so, when are they likely to be dealt with; and how many cottages have been built under the Labourers Acts in the Derrylin district of Lisnaskea Union.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The last inquiry was held in May, 1907, and an order was made on 25th June authorising sixty-three labourers' cottages and four additional plots for cottages already provided. The Local Government Board are informed by the clerk of the district council that 204 representations for cottages or allotments have since been lodged, all of which, except two, have received a first consideration by the council. The selection of sites have been postponed from time to time for various reasons. Six labourers' cottages have been built in the Derrylin district.

Persons Receiving Police Protection in Ireland.

Mr. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what was the number of persons receiving constant police protection and special protection by patrols throughout Ireland on the last day of each month from May, 1907, to May, 1908, inclusive.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The figures are as follows—

Month.	Number of persons receiving constant protection.	Number receiving protection by patrol.
1907:		
May - - - - - -	47	163
June - - - - - -	50	167
July - - - - - -	66	175
August - - - - - -	66	209
September - - - - -	64	198
October - - - - - -	61	215
November - - - - -	63	229
December - - - - -	59	222
1908:		
January - - - - - -	54	216
February - - - - -	61	217
March - - - - - -	60	225
April - - - - - -	63	228
May - - - - - -	70	232

Greenwich Age Pensioners.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state how many men who joined the Navy prior to the Order in Council made in the year 1878 are now eligible to become Greenwich age pensioners, but who do not actually receive such pensions; what is the highest age of the persons so eligible but not in receipt of the pensions; and what amount would be required annually to pay the pensions of such persons who joined prior to the date mentioned.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The number of men now eligible who joined the Navy prior to the Order in Council of 1878, but who do not receive the pension, is estimated to be 4,050. The approximate average age of men, other than those who have served in the Seamen Pensioner Reserve, to whom age pensions are now awarded, is sixty-four. The additional annual provision required to pay the pension to such persons would be about £30,700.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards.

Mr. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can now inform the House when the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards is to be relieved in Egypt so as to enable it to return home for disbandment.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): I have nothing at present to add to the information which I gave my hon. friend on this subject on 19th February.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Do not the War Office intend sooner or later to disband this battalion?

Mr. HALDANE: I have said all I have to say on the matter.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): Is this battalion to remain at Cairo or go on to Khartoum?

Mr. HALDANE asked for notice of the Question.

War Office Contract at Salisbury Plain.

Mr. ROGERS (Wiltshire Devizes): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that the contractors in the Salisbury Plain district, Messrs. Billett and Musselwhite, of Salisbury, have recently reduced the wages of their labourers from 5d. to 4½d. per hour; whether the rate paid in all previous work, both in cases where it was carried out by contract and where the War Office employed labour directly, was 5d.; and whether he will take steps to ensure that the labourers employed on this contract are paid at a similar rate.

Mr. HALDANE: The case is being investigated.

Territorial Army—Delay in Gazetting Officers.

Major RENTON (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War the reason for delaying the gazetting of officers to the Territorial Army.

Mr. HALDANE: The delay in the gazetting has been due chiefly to the fact that all units had first of all to be recognised by the Army Council and subsequently the names of officers wishing to transfer had to be considered by the County Associations and by the general officers commanding-in-chief. General officers commanding-in-chief were informed on 30th April that any officer recommended by them for transfer, etc., might be considered provisionally appointed, pending submission to His Majesty in the ordinary course. The lists will now appear weekly in the *Gazette.*

No Reduction of Guards and Household Cavalry.

Major RENTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the disbandment of a brigade of Guards and a regiment of Household Cavalry is in contemplation.

Mr. HALDANE: No, Sir.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Arising out of that reply, may we assume that the right hon. Gentleman will not effect any such drastic change as is suggested in the Question without giving the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the subject?

Mr. HALDANE: Certainly; that will be assumed.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Did not the right hon. Gentleman promise that one of the battalions of the brigade of Guards—namely, the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards—would be disbanded?

Mr. HALDANE: That has nothing whatever to do with the Answer to this Question.

Soldiers and Civil Disturbances.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has taken legal advice as to the position of a private soldier who, in the suppression of civil disturbances, obeys the order of his officer to fire on the rioters.

MR. HALDANE: As the whole of the question of the employment of troops to aid the civil power in the suppression of civil disturbances is now being considered by a Committee of this House, I think it would be undesirable to discuss the point raised by my hon. friend through the medium of Question and Answer. The Committee of this House have the whole matter under consideration.

Cavalry in Scotland.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has now definitely abandoned his intention of quartering two or more regiments of Regular cavalry in Scotland; and, if not, what steps have been taken to further the matter.

MR. HALDANE: I have no further information to give the hon. and gallant Member on this subject at present. I do not, of course, go back on anything I have said.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Has not inconvenience been caused in the matter of Royal escorts by the absence of cavalry from Scotland?

MR. HALDANE was understood to reply in the negative.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Does the right hon. Gentleman still hope to quarter two or more cavalry regiments in Scotland?

MR. HALDANE: I never committed myself to two.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Did the right hon. Gentleman not definitely promise one cavalry regiment?

MR. HALDANE: Yes, I think so.

New Bayonet.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the number of the new bayonets that have been manufactured, and how many have been issued; and whether the reports concerning them are satisfactory.

MR. HALDANE: Four thousand eight hundred bayonets have been manufactured up to date. None have been issued.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: How many will be required to be completed before an issue will be made?

MR. HALDANE: I must ask for notice.

The Lance.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is contemplated that regiments armed with the lance shall take this weapon with them on active service, or whether this weapon is issued purely for ceremonial and drill purposes.

MR. HALDANE: The instructions contained in Army Order 39 of March, 1903, are still in force. These prescribe that the lance will only be carried on escort duty, at reviews, and other ceremonial parades, and not on guard, in the field, at manœuvres, or on active service.

Tidworth.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that up to the present time no buildings, other than those used for Government purposes, have been permitted to be built on War Office property on Salisbury Plain, it is now contemplated to issue an order authorising the erection of shops on land at Tidworth which was bought for manœuvre and other military purposes.

MR. HALDANE: It has been decided to permit the erection of business premises on the left side of the road to the station at Tidworth and between the school and the station. The use of this narrow strip of land for shops, etc., which are much wanted to cater for the requirements of the troops, will not interfere with the general purposes for which the land on Salisbury Plain was acquired.

Mr. ASHLEY: Do I understand that there is no change in policy, but that the land as a whole is to be kept for military purposes?

Mr. HALDANE: No change.

Khudiram Bhose.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Khudiram Bhose, now under sentence of death in India, has been several times of recent years under restraint for lunacy; whether his attitude during his trial would seem to indicate that he was not conscious of the seriousness of his position; and whether, in view of these facts, he will cause his execution to be delayed until the state of his mind has been tested.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): The Secretary of State has ascertained that no plea of past or present insanity was raised in Khudiram Bhose's defence either before the magistrate or in the Sessions Court. All cases involving sentence of death, after trial in the Sessions Court, are by statute submitted to the High Court for confirmation. The High Court may make such inquiry upon any point bearing upon the guilt or innocence of the person convicted as it thinks fit. The Executive Government cannot interfere in a case that is still before a judicial tribunal.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE: When will the case come before the High Court?

Mr. BUCHANAN: Almost immediately.

Native Labour on the Rand—Mortality Statistics.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether in 1907 the mortality among natives recruited for the Rand from those parts of Africa north of latitude 22° S. was 69·7 per 1,000 per annum; whether among those from British Central Africa alone the mortality was 73·8 per cent., and that consequently the recruiting of natives from British Central Africa has been stopped by the Colonial Office; whether in February, 1908, the mortality among the natives from Portuguese territory north of 22° S. was at the rate of 74·9 per 1,000 per annum; and whether he will take steps to prevent the recruiting of those natives also in future.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Colonel Seely, Liverpool, Abercromby): The figures given in the first part of the Question are correct, but the recruiting of natives from British Central Africa was stopped by the Secretary of State because of the high death-rate prevailing among them in spite of the fact that they were being largely employed on a form of surface work. It was therefore apprehended that, if employed in labour underground as was proposed, the death-rate would be greatly increased, and as His Majesty's Government are directly responsible for the affairs of the British Central Africa Protectorate they felt obliged to refuse to accede to recruitment for underground labour only. I would refer the hon. Member to Lord Elgin's despatches at page 73 of Cd. 3993. The mortality among Portuguese natives for February, 1908, appears to be 72 per 1,000, slightly lower than the figure of my hon. friend. The existence of a death-rate of about 70 per 1,000 cannot be regarded otherwise than as a subject for anxiety and watchfulness, but I feel confident that the Transvaal Government, who are now directly responsible for the recruiting of these natives, are alive to the importance of the subject. I would remind the hon. Member that, high as these figures are, it is at least satisfactory to know that the average death-rate for all natives employed in the mines in the Transvaal has been reduced to considerably less than half what it was in 1903.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: Are we to understand that recruiting in British Central Africa was stopped on account of the high death-rate? If a similar death-rate exists among the natives recruited in Portuguese territory will that recruiting not be stopped by the Colonial Office?

Colonel SEELY: When the hon. Gentleman reads my reply he will see how the circumstances are different in the two cases.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): When the hon. Gentleman speaks of British Central Africa does he refer to the British administrative unit—Nyassaland—or some wider area; also what *status* have the Colonial Office for making representations to the Portuguese Government in this behalf?

Colonel SEELY: Any representation we may make will no doubt receive careful consideration as coming from a friendly Power. As to Nyassaland, I will inquire.

Mr. MYER (Lambeth, N.): Has the hon. Gentleman any statistics showing the normal death-rate among the natives?

Colonel SEELY: I do not think so, but I will inquire.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): Is it the fact that the death-rate among the Chinese is only 18 per 1,000?

Colonel SEELY: I do not think that figure is correct; still the circumstances are entirely different and the hon. Gentleman must remember the number of Chinese repatriated immediately they show signs of unfitness for the work.

Dinizulu.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether His Majesty's Government has received any official information from Natal showing by what authority the magistrate refused permission to Miss Colenso to act as interpreter to Dinizulu; whether the present interpreter is one who has the confidence of Dinizulu; and whether, in view of the importance to the defence that Dinizulu's interpreter should be in the fullest sympathy with the accused chief, His Majesty's Government will insist that the wishes of Dinizulu in this respect should be carried out without reserve.

Colonel SEELY: Yes, Sir. We have received a report of the decision of the magistrate who is, as the Supreme Court recently decided, the official who controls the issue of gaol passes. While fully admitting the value of Miss Colenso's friendship to Dinizulu he held that her action had been such as to prejudice public opinion in the Colony, whence the jury would be drawn against the prisoner and to protract the preliminary examination; he therefore refused to give her a pass as interpreter. He added that "the prisoner's right of access to Miss Colenso as a friend will not be in the least disturbed, and will continue under the restriction passes as heretofore." On 10th June Dinizulu's solicitors applied for Ncapai, who was formerly Dinizulu's secretary, to be admitted as interpreter, and this was allowed by the magistrate.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can inform the House as to the nature and constitution of the special Court which the Natal Government is about to set up for the trial of Dinizulu; and whether he can now say when the preliminary investigation is likely to be concluded.

Colonel SEELY: I hope to be able to make a full statement within a few days on the first point raised by my hon. friend, and I understand that the case for the prosecution is now almost concluded.

The Case of Mr. Luxenburg.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the claim against the Russian Government for the injury done to Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg in March last has yet been put forward; and, if not, can he explain the delay?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. J. A. Pease, Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir Edward Grey): It is necessary, if a claim is put forward, that it should be based either upon some ground of international law or upon our own practice. My right hon. friend has therefore considered the case in consultation with the Home Office, and he is now doing so in consultation with the legal advisers of the Crown. My right hon. friend has promised to inform the hon. Member as soon as a decision is come to, till then he cannot say more than that.

Press Prosecution in Korea.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can make any statement regarding the circumstances which have brought about the criminal proceedings against Mr. E. T. Bethell, a British subject, in Seoul, who has been accused of spreading sedition in Korea through articles published in a Korean newspaper; and whether the British Government admits the right of the Japanese Minister in Korea to prosecute a British subject for an offence alleged to have been committed outside Japanese territory and against the Korean State.

MR. J. A. PEASE: In April last year the Japanese Government drew attention to the anti-Japanese articles published in the *Korea Daily News*, a newspaper published at Seoul, of which Mr. E. T. Bethell was proprietor and editor. The newspaper has two editions, one in English and the other in Korean; and it was alleged that articles in the latter aimed at stirring up rebellion among the Koreans. Proceedings were taken in consequence against Mr. Bethell in October last before His Majesty's Consul-General at Seoul, sitting as a Judge of a Provincial Court, under Article 83 of the China and Korea Order in Council of 1904, for acts and conduct likely to produce a breach of the peace. The case against Mr. Bethell was found proved, and he was on 5th October last bound over in the sum of £300 to be of good behaviour for six months. In spite of a subsequent assurance that more care would be taken in future as to the language used in the Korean edition, further articles have, since the expiry of the period of six months, formed the subject of complaint by the Japanese authorities, as a result of which proceedings were instituted in His Britannic Majesty's Supreme Court for China and Corea sitting at Seoul, before the assistant judge of that court, in respect of an alleged violation of Article 5 of the China and Korea (Amendment) Order in Council, 1907, which deals with seditious publications. The hearing took place on 15th June after due warning had been given to Mr. Bethell to enable him to secure legal assistance if he desired to do so; and on 18th June he was sentenced to three weeks imprisonment as a misdemeanant of the first division. The sentence also provides for his giving security to be of good behaviour for six months or being deported. With reference to the second part of the Question, some misapprehension appears to exist. Mr. Bethell was prosecuted, not by the Japanese, but by the Crown Advocate in His Britannic Majesty's Supreme Court for China and Korea, for a specific offence against British law, and under the provisions of His Majesty's Order in Council of 1907 above-mentioned.

MR. SMEATON was understood to ask if the offence alleged was against the Japanese Government or the Korean State.

MR. J. A. PEASE: I am under the impression it was against the Korean State, but I will inquire.

Great Britain, Russia, and Macedonia

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether an agreement has been reached between His Majesty's Government and that of Russia over the Macedonian question; whether he can state to the House the heads of this agreement; and whether it has received the assent of the other Powers signatory to the treaty of Berlin.

MR. J. A. PEASE: We are in agreement with the Russian Government, but there has not yet been time to consult the other Powers; till that has been done my right hon. friend cannot say what proposals will be made at Constantinople.

Counterfeit Baronets.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to a Report, dated 12th December, 1906, of a Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the Baronetage, wherein it is stated that from fifty-five to seventy-seven baronets in this country have wrongfully assumed that title, and that no means exist at present for distinguishing the real from the unreal; and what steps he proposes to take to institute a tribunal to deal with this evil.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I have nothing at present to add to the answer I gave on 11th May to the noble Lord the Member for South Kensington, when I said that the Report of this Committee is still under my consideration, but that I hope to deal with it shortly.

MR. WATT: Are we to understand the right hon. Gentleman has departed from the position of his predecessor that these seventy-seven counterfeits should be exposed?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am not aware that my predecessor took up any such position.

MR. H. C. LEA: Is a counterfeit baronet not a better man than a baronet who has purchased his patent and paid the money into the Party funds over which the right hon. Gentleman used to preside?

MR. GLADSTONE: That is a matter of opinion.

Home Office Butter Contracts.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say whether any Government contract over which the Home Office has the right to disapprove has been given to the firm of Pearks and Company for their milk-blended butter; and, if so, can he say whether any tenders were received for butter for the same purpose; and whether preference was given to milk-blended butter, and for what reason.

MR. GLADSTONE: No such contract has been given.

Waitresses' Grievances.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether his attention has been drawn to reports of various stoppages of work or strikes by waitresses employed in public restaurants in London, Manchester, and elsewhere; whether he is aware that these stoppages are due to low wages, fines, and alleged ill-treatment; and whether he will consider the advisability of instituting an inquiry into the profits made by and the complaints made against the firms affected by the stoppages referred to.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have seen the reports which have appeared in the Press, but I have no official information on the subject, which is hardly within the jurisdiction of my Department. I have no power to institute such an inquiry as is suggested; but, so far as fines are concerned, the question is under the consideration of the Truck Committee.

Aldgate to Bow Tramways.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has yet sanctioned the stud system of the London County Council tramways from Aldgate to Bow; how long it is since application was made to the Board of Trade to inspect the system, and what is the reason that the certificate has not been granted; and whether, in view of the inconvenience suffered by the public, he can hold out any hope that the certificate will be granted at an early date.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): The Board of Trade approved of the adoption of the system in question in October last, but this approval was, of course, subject to inspection of the lines when completed, and before they are brought into use for traffic. Application for an inspection was received on the 17th instant, and arrangements were made with the officers of the Council for the inspection to be made to-day. Should the report of the inspection recommend that sanction be given to the opening of the lines, the necessary certificates will be issued forthwith.

MR. B. S. STRAUS: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that there is no unnecessary delay: this is a valuable piece of line?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I will do everything in my power to prevent unnecessary delay of any sort.

Accident to H.M.S. "Commonwealth."

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the accident to H.M.S. "Commonwealth" in Lamlash Harbour last autumn, the Government will now authorise the Northern Lights Commissioners to place a gas-light buoy off the Hamilton Rock, so as to prevent similar accidents in the future; how many times the Northern Lights Commissioners have applied for permission to place the gas-light buoy upon the spit of the Hamilton Rock, and how many times the Board of Trade have refused; whether all such refusals were made prior to the accident to H.M.S. "Commonwealth"; and whether they are aware that four other ships have been damaged by striking the same spit.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The Board of Trade authorised in February last the placing of a gas-light buoy off the Hamilton Rock, and I am informed by the Northern Lighthouse Commissioners that they anticipate that it will be established on or about 1st August next. The Commissioners applied to the Board of Trade for sanction to this work in 1905 and again in 1906, but it was found necessary at that time to defer proceeding with it in consequence of the larger number of new works of a more pressing nature which were then brought forward. Last year it was included in the Estimates for 1908–9 with the result which I have stated. The accident to H.M.S. "Commonwealth" was subsequent to the first two applications made by the Commissioners, but I have no information as to the other four ships referred to.

Mr. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): Might not this accident have been avoided had the Board of Trade adopted my suggestion which I made by direct question addressed to the right hon. Gentleman's predecessor last year that the Northern Lights Commissioners should erect a beacon at this point?

Mr. CHURCHILL: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. WATT: Will the right hon. Gentleman say which is the proper term "off the rock" or "on the rock?"

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am not quite sure, but I think in nautical parlance, the proper phrase is "off the rock."

Killarney Hotels Grievance.

Mr. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Great Southern and Western Railway Company are giving preferential treatment to a few hotels in Killarney in the matter of combined rail and hotel tickets, and by allowing the representatives of six of such hotels access to the platform from which the representatives of the other hotels are excluded; and whether he can take any steps to prevent this preferential treatment being continued by the company.

Mr. CHURCHILL: As the hon. Member was informed in reply to the Question which he asked on 7th June, 1906, the question whether the action of the Railway Company in this matter creates an undue preference within the meaning of the Railway and Canal Traffic Acts is a legal one, on which the Board of Trade can express no opinion. I have, however, communicated with the Company and am informed that a certain number of representatives of hotels are allowed access to the platform and that to allow any more would lead to overcrowding.

Penmachno School Site.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that a Local Government inspector was sent down to Penmachno on 15th April and inspected the site of a proposed council school; and whether seeing that, the site is right above the sewage tank of the village, he will say if the inspector reported favourably or otherwise on the proposed site, and if he will consent to lay his report upon the Table of the House.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.): It is the case that an inspector of the Local Government Board visited this site on the date referred to. He found that the site was not free from objection, but that the school had already been commenced and that apparently it must be proceeded with. There is a sewage tank in the neighbourhood, but I understand that it is practically disused. The Report of the inspector is a confidential document and is made for the information of the Board, and I could not undertake to lay it on the Table.

LORD R. CECIL: Why was the inquiry delayed until it was too late to be of any use?

MR. MASTERMAN: It was held immediately the application was made for the loan.

MR. MYER: Why is the Report treated as confidential?

MR. MASTERMAN: All such Reports to the Board are so treated.

MR. MYER: This is a very serious matter.

Imported Milk and Milk Products.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that British and Irish manufacturers of condensed milk use only full-cream milk for condensing purposes, whilst foreign firms use machine-skimmed milk; and whether in view of the increased importation of Foreign condensed milk, which has risen from 352,330 cwts. in 1888 to 907,983 cwts. in 1906, and of the ignorance of the poorer classes in Great Britain concerning the food value of milk and milk products, the Local Government Board are taking any steps to protect the public in respect to this item of diet.

MR. MASTERMAN: I am aware of the facts respecting this subject. The chief point as to the food value of condensed skimmed milk is that it is unfitted for the feeding of infants, and it is desirable that this should be made widely known. I am glad to say much has been done of late in this direction both by sanitary authorities and voluntary associations by means of the information given by health visitors, the issue of leaflets and otherwise. The matter will not be lost sight of.

MR. FLYNN: Are the Local Government Board taking any steps in the matter? Are they aware that a large proportion of this so-called condensed milk comes from Belgium, a country which indulges in the most scientific and ingenious adulteration?

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) Have the Government considered the advisability of adopting the Canadian system, with an expert to report on improved processes and spread the knowledge of the merits of home products?

MR. MASTERMAN: No doubt my right hon. friend will bear all these points in mind.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): Is it part of the policy of the Government to discourage the importation of foreign foodstuffs?

MR. FLYNN: My Question was as to adulteration.

Eye Workhouse—Flogging of Boys.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, concerning the alleged flogging of boys in Eye Workhouse, he has yet received a Report of any inquiry undertaken either directly at the instance of the Local Government Board, or by the Hartismere Board of Guardians; and, seeing that with reference to a similar case he has recently expressed disapproval of corporal punishment being inflicted on the naked bodies of boys confined in workhouses, whether he can see his way to prohibit in all Poor Law institutions the infliction of corporal punishment in this manner.

MR. MASTERMAN: As regards the particular case mentioned, I would refer to the answer which the President of the Local Government Board gave on the 4th instant to Questions on the subject. I will send my hon. friend a copy of the answer. As regards corporal punishment generally the President did not say that it should never be inflicted on the naked bodies of boys, but he does not think that a cane should be used for the purpose. The Regulations in force prohibit the infliction of corporal punishment except with a rod or other instrument such as may have been approved by the guardians or Visiting Committee, and contain other provisions which are intended to prevent abuse of the power. I may add that in the Eye case the Local Government Board have requested the guardians to take care that the whole of these regulations are strictly observed.

Mr. CLYNES: I hope it will be borne in mind that the boys referred to in this Question are workhouse boys?

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): How many occupants of the Front Bench have in their time been punished in the manner referred to in the Question?

*Mr. REES: What kind of weapon is indicated by the words "rod or other instrument?"

Mr. MASTERMAN: Probably one of the kind familiar to the hon. Gentleman.

Motor Accidents.

Mr. G. A. HARDY (Suffolk, Stowmarket): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the increasing number of motor accidents, he would consider the desirability of impounding cars abusing the unwritten law and violating the provisions of statute law.

Mr. MASTERMAN: I will take note of the suggestion of my hon. friend; but effect could not be given to it without legislation, and I am afraid that the difficulties in the way of carrying it out would be very great.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Can the hon. Gentleman say what is the meaning of "unwritten law" in the Question?

Mr. MASTERMAN: That should be addressed to the hon. Member putting the Question.

Extension of the Law Courts.

Mr. ALDEN: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works, if he can state whether it is intended to erect additional courts on the open space to the west of the Law Courts facing St. Clement's Danes Church, Strand; whether he is aware that the destruction of this open space would mean a loss to Central London; and, if so, whether he will consider the possibility of finding some other site near by which would meet the needs of the case.

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale): The answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. I regret that I am unable to adopt the suggestion of my hon. friend that another site should be found near by. When the Law Courts were originally designed it was always contemplated that any extension of them would be erected on this ground, and I see no reason to depart from that decision. I may remind my hon. friend that the matter was fully discussed when the Estimates were before the House in April last and that the Committee concurred without a division in the decision of the Government.

Mr. ALDEN: Is it intended to make a grant to the Metropolitan Garden Association for the destruction of the work they have done in this open space?

Mr. HARCOURT: I believe most of the money for that was contributed by the late Mr. W. H. Smith.

Mr. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): When will the work be commenced

Mr. HARCOURT: As soon as possible.

Dismissal of School Teachers.

Mr. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, under the existing law, if the managers of a non-provided school dismiss the teacher without good cause, the education committee of the county council have no option but to ratify the dismissal or face the risk of the school being closed and the consequent expense of having to build a new one; and if this is so, whether he will provide by future legislation that the county council be given some less costly and more effective means of protecting school teachers against unjust dismissal.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I am not prepared to say that in the case of all voluntary schools, as is suggested in the Question, the only sanction attaching to a local authority's decision against the reasonableness of the dismissal of a teacher by the managers is the closure of the school, still less the building of a new school in its place by the local authority from county funds. In many cases the trusts would virtually operate to prevent the discontinuance of the school. Much would depend on the particular circumstances. The Education Bill now before the House, placing the management of all public elementary schools in the local education authority's hands instead of with privately appointed managers as at present, will remove the difficulty to which my hon. friend refers.

Purley School Mistress.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, in view of the fact that the mistress of Purley National School has been recently dismissed by the school managers from her post for no fault either of character or capacity, and that her dismissal has been approved by the education committee of the Berks County Council without her having had any opportunity of being heard, he will consider the desirability of providing by future legislation that no school teacher shall be liable to dismissal without being heard in his or her own defence.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I think there would be considerable practical difficulties in adopting the course which my hon. friend suggests, but I hope a remedy may be found in the legislation now before Parliament under which the appointment and dismissal of all teachers in public elementary schools will be vested in the local education authority.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that, although the schoolmistress of the National School at Purley has been recently dismissed by the managers, and the dismissal has been ratified by the casting vote of the chairman of the education committee of the Berks County Council, no charge has ever been brought against her character or capacity, that she is still in occupation of the school house, and that the county council at a special meeting have expressed a wish, without a dissenting voice, that another post of a similar character should be found for her; and whether he is in a positon to take any steps to give effect to the wish of the county council.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I sympathise with the solicitude of the local authority for the teacher's well-being, though the exercise of their powers of withholding consent to her dismissal would appear to have been a more practical means of giving effect to their wishes. The appointment of teachers is not vested in the Board of Education, and I have, therefore, no power to afford assistance, but I trust that this expression of opinion on the part of the county council will result in another post being found for her.

Penzance Expresses—Bicycle Charges.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether charges for bicycles as excess luggage on railways of about a farthing a mile, together with an extra charge of one shilling for collection and delivery, when the passenger travels by trains such as the Penzance expresses, bring the third-class fares within the limit properly to enable the Board of Inland Revenue to issue a certificate of exemption from passenger duty on such fares, or whether they refuse a certificate in such cases.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol E.): There is no power under the law to require railway companies to add the charges made for excess luggage to fares charged to passengers for the purpose of determining whether or not such fares are exempt from passenger duty.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is prepared to invite all the banks of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to supply voluntarily to Parliament statements showing in each case the total value of unclaimed balances since the foundation of the bank; the interest which would have accrued to each account if it had not been dormant; the total value of the drafts and bills of exchange remaining unpaid, and interest thereon; the value of bank notes issued and not presented for repayment, with interest thereon; the value of unclaimed stock and dividends held, with interest thereon; and the estimated value of the plate and other valuables held by the bank and unclaimed.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The Chancellor of the Exchequer does not propose to issue such an invitation.

MR. J. MACVEAGH asked why this difference was made between individuals and banks. If a private citizen appropriated funds left in his charge, he was liable to be prosecuted as a common thief. Why was there one law for private citizens and another for bank directors? What was the objection entertained by the Treasury officials to asking the banks for this information?

MR. HOBHOUSE: That Question had better be addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I have addressed it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer half-a-dozen times without getting any answer.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): Is the hon. Gentleman aware I have a Question on the Paper to-morrow asking if by law the banks are not compelled to make this return?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I cannot anticipate to-morrow's answer.

Duties on Local Taxation Licences.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes that the duties on local taxation licences, specified in Clause 6 (4) of the Finance Bill, shall continue to be collected by the officers of Excise in Scotland and Ireland (so far as such duties exist and are now collected by the officers of Excise in the case of Ireland), and that the work shall not be transferred, as in England and Wales, to the county councils; and whether he can state the reasons for this divergent treatment, and the steps he proposes to take to allow the officers concerned adequate time for the proper fulfilment of their duties as pension officers.

MR. HOBHOUSE: It was not found practicable to include the transfer of the collection of these licences in Scotland and Ireland to the local authorities in the present Finance Bill, but it is to be hoped that analogous arrangements will follow in those two countries in due course. Proper arrangements will be made for giving the officers in Scotland and Ireland any assistance that may be necessary to enable them to perform their additional duties in connection with old-age pensions.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the right to the use of a room or cottage free of rent is to be considered as forming part of the means of a person for the purpose of the Old-Age Pensions Bill.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Yes, Sir.

Licence Duties.

MR. SEARS (Cheltenham): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will say what the item of £40,000 in Clause 63 of the Finance Bill, to be paid annually to the local authorities in England and Wales, represents; whether it is the present cost of collecting these licence duties by Government officials who at the same time discharge other revenues duties within the same areas; if so, has he considered that the cost of collection by local authorities, who will have to employ a staff for the work, will be greater than the sum named; and whether the difference in cost is to be borne by the local authorities.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I do not anticipate that, under the arrangements which I shall be ready to explain in detail in Committee on the Finance Bill, the charge falling on the local authorities need exceed the sums which will be placed at their disposal.

Inland Revenue Staff.

MR. SEARS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider whether it is possible, by a comparatively small addition to the staff of the Inland Revenue, to meet the work of the old-age pension scheme without disturbing the collection by Government officials of the licence duties proposed to be handed over to the local authorities; and whether this can be done at considerably less cost than the £40,000 proposed to be paid to the local authorities, and, at the same time, not reverse a policy deliberately adopted in 1867 and continued since with conspicuous success.

MR. HOBHOUSE: This matter has been fully considered.

Transfer of Excise to the Board of Customs.

MR. SEARS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the late Mr. Gladstone, in expressing an opinion adverse to the transfer of the Excise to the Board of Customs in 1888, gave as his reason the unsatisfactory traditions of that Board, and their inability not only to initiate reforms but even to make suggestions; is he aware that this inability was due to the system of patronage under which the Board was constituted, and the highest posts under the Board were filled with men without practical training or previous experience of the actual work of the Department; is he aware that the same conditions still prevail; and will he consider whether it is advisable to transfer the extensive, complex, responsible, and more varied work of the Excise to a Board of the character described?

MR. HOBHOUSE: Whatever may have been the facts at the date referred to (and on this I express no opinion), the conditions prevailing to-day are in my opinion not such as the question suggests.

The Bournemouth Cliff Murder.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been called to the case of the man M'Guire, charged at the recent Winchester Assizes with murder, when the jury were unable to agree and he was put back for re-trial; whether the date of the next assizes is November; and, if so, whether, having regard to the fact that this involves the detention of the prisoner in gaol for a further period of six months before re-trial, he can take steps to have the case brought to the Central Criminal Court or elsewhere in order that it may be more speedily disposed of?

MR. ASHLEY: At the same time may I ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, having regard to the fact that the man M'Guire, recently tried at Winchester for murder, has been in gaol for a period of four months, he will take steps to have the case brought up to the High Court for trial by writ of certiorari or otherwise before the Winchester Assizes in November?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) said the case of the man M'Guire had received and was receiving very careful consideration. He hoped in a few days to be able to say definitely what course the prosecution would pursue in regard to it. In any event, he thought he might say that the delay to the next Assizes in November, which was suggested by the hon. Member for Hackney as possible, would be avoided.

Hollesley Bay Farm Colony.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture has instructed any of its officers to report upon the Hollesley Bay farm colony; whether the Report has been received; whether he can indicate its nature; and whether he will circulate it for the information of Members?

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): In consequence of an Inquiry from the Central (Unemployed) Body for London as to whether it would be possible for the Board to institute a scheme of small holdings for men who had been trained at the Hollesley Bay Farm the Small Holdings Commissioners visited the Colony in February last. They reported the result of their visit to the Board. but their Report was of an informal and confidential character, and it would not be practicable to give publicity to it. It was ascertained that the Board had no power to give effect to the suggestion made to them.

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD: Is it quite impossible to give hon. Members an indication of the views of agricultural experts on this Colony?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: It is not the practice, and it is not deemed desirable.

Small Holdings—Register of Applications.

MR. MORRELL (Oxfordshire, Henley): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Small Holdings Commissioners have formed a register of all applications for land received by the county councils, showing the name of each applicant, amount of land applied for, and other particulars, so as to enable them to ascertain how far these applications are complied with; and, if not, whether the Board will consider the advisability of their doing so.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: A register of all applications for small holdings is kept by county councils giving all particulars, and we also keep a record of all applications for small holdings which are addressed directly to the Board or of which copies are sent to us.

MR. MORRELL: Do not the Small Holdings Commissioners think it their duty to ascertain the information for themselves?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The information will always be at the disposal of the Board of Agriculture.

Houses on Small Holdings.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board are aware that some county councils have intimated that they will not erect houses under the Small Holdings Act on any holdings of less than 25 acres in extent; and whether the Board will direct such councils that there is no such limitation in the Act.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board are aware of one case in which the Small Holdings Committee of a county council have intimated that, as a rule, a house should only be built where the holding is of at least 25 acres, but we have received no information which suggests that any specific hardship or difficulty has arisen in consequence. There is no obligation on the part of county councils to erect houses, but the matter will be kept in view.

Inquiries under the Small Holdings Act.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the attention of the Board has been called to the fact that many inquiries under the Small Holdings Act have been held by the committees of the county councils at times at which it was difficult or impossible for many of the applicants to attend; that at Uckfield, in Sussex, an inquiry was held at 11 a.m.; at Cowley, in Oxfordshire, at 12 noon; at Mere, in Wiltshire, at 2 p.m.; at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, at 3.30 p.m., and so on; that some of these inquiries have been held at police courts, police stations, and other inconvenient places; whether the Board will consider the advisability of suggesting that all such inquiries should in future be held in the evening after work hours, and if possible in schools or public halls; and whether the Board will direct that when inquiries have been held at other times that an additional inquiry should now be held.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board are aware that many of the inquiries to which the hon. Member refers have been held in the day-time, but their attention had not previously been directed to the particular cases mentioned. If in any case the interests of any applicant have been prejudiced by his inability to attend an inquiry they entertain no doubt that the county council would endeavour to remove any hardship which may have arisen. It must, however, be borne in mind that the members of the Small Holdings Committees and Sub-Committees are doing voluntarily an enormous amount of valuable work, and their convenience must also be considered.

MR. MORRELL: Will the hon. Baronet recommend the Board to obtain regular Returns as to what is going on?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: I do not think that arises out of the Question on the Paper.

Oat Crop Diseases.

VISCOUNT DALRYMPLE (Wigton): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been drawn to the damage done to the oat crop this year in the South-West of Scotland by the powt or leather grub; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made into its ravages and the methods of dealing with this scourge.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The pest to which the noble Lord refers is unfortunately very prevalent this season, not only in the South-West of Scotland but in the North-West and other parts of England. We have issued a leaflet describing the pest and the measures that should be taken against it. I shall be glad to supply the noble Lord with copies of the leaflet.

Inquiries under the Small Holdings Act—Expenses of Applicants.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board will direct that county councils shall pay the reasonable travelling expenses of applicants attending inquiries under the Small Holdings Act at a distance from their homes, and shall make good any loss incurred through absence from work when this has occurred; and whether the Board will repay such expense under Clause 17 of the Act.

SIR E. STRACHEY: The Board have no power to direct county councils to pay the expenses to which my hon. friend refers, or to repay those expenses out of the Small Holdings Account.

Schemes for Small Holdings.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what part of the sum of £100,000 has already been earmarked by the Commissioners for schemes already sanctioned or about to be approved; and whether the Board will say in respect of what expenses incurred by the county councils the money will be paid.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board have not yet received any claims for the repayment of expenses incurred in respect of schemes submitted to them, and it is not, therefore, possible to say what those expenses will amount to. I shall be pleased to send my hon. friend a copy of a circular letter issued to county councils on 24th April last which will afford him the information for which he asks in the latter part of his Question.

MR. MORRELL: But in a recent speech did not the hon. Baronet himself say that the whole of the £100,000 had been allotted?

[No Answer was returned.]

Capital for Small Holdings.

MR. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board are aware that in many cases applicants for small holdings have been asked at a public meeting to state their resources, the amount of their experience, and the reasons of their application; and whether the Board will direct that all questions of a purely private nature should be put to the applicants in private.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: I understand that the usual practice is for applicants for small holdings to be interviewed in private and for the information given to be treated as confidential. We should bring to the notice of a county council any specific complaints which may be made to us on this subject, but we have no power to issue directions in the matter.

Mr. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board is aware that in some cases county councils, through their committees, have made unreasonable stipulations as to the amount of capital that applicants for small holdings must show, particularly in the case of those applicants who have other occupations on which to depend, and therefore do not require so much capital; whether in some cases committees have insisted that as much as £10 for every acre applied for must be shown and whether the Board will say that no rigid rule of this kind can fairly be made.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board have frequently expressed the opinion, in correspondence with county councils, that no hard and fast rule can be adopted as to the amount of capital which applicants for small holdings should possess. The amount will, of course, vary considerably even in the same county, and in some special cases £10 an acre might not be excessive.

Small Holdings Scheme.

Mr. MORRELL: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, from what counties schemes have been received by the Commissioners; which of these have yet been approved; what is the shortest time that the Commissioners anticipate will be required for the consideration and approval of a scheme; and whether the Commissioners will direct that councils shall fix a date, as has already been done by the County Council of Kent, within which all applications for the first scheme must be prepared, reserving subsequent applications for a future scheme.

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY: With reference to the first part of the Question perhaps my hon. friend will refer to the reply I gave on the 18th instant to the hon. Member for Reigate, to which I may add that a further draft scheme submitted by the County Council for Gloucestershire has since been provisionally approved. It is not possible to say what is the shortest time required for the consideration and approval of a scheme. It depends on various considerations, *e.g.* whether the scheme is based on voluntary or compulsory proceedings, and whether any and if so what objections have been made and so forth. We do not see our way to adopt the suggestion made by my hon. friend in the latter part of the Question.

Mr. MORRELL: Is any scheme likely to be sanctioned before 21st September next?

Sir EDWARD STRACHEY asked for notice.

Inspection of Glasgow Schools.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if the Scottish Education Department has received complaints within recent years from the School Board of Glasgow as to the efficiency of the inspection by His Majesty's Inspectors of the work done by the teachers in their schools; and, if so, whether any, and, if any, what, action has been taken upon such complaints.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): No such complaints have been received by the Department.

Deer Forest Return.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state when the Deer Forest Return, granted on 9th March last, will be issued.

Mr. SINCLAIR : The Return will probably be completed and issued very shortly.

Mr. WEIR : This session ?

Mr. SINCLAIR : Almost immediately, I hope.

The Vatersay Evictions.

Mr. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state the area of Barra and Vatersay and the population thereon ; and, seeing that the proprietress declines to give the people access to the land, and that the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill was withdrawn by the Government last year and rejected this year in another place, will he state what action the Government proposes to take to prevent the further prosecution of these people.

Mr. SINCLAIR : The estimated area of Barra is approximately 18,832 acres, with a population at last Census of 2,362 ; the estimated area of Vatersay is approximately 2,250 acres, with a population at last census of thirteen. The proposals of the Government for removing this difficulty are contained in the correspondence that has been published.

Mr. WEIR asked what action the Government proposed to take to prevent the further prosecution of these people.

Mr. SINCLAIR : I have nothing to add to what I have already said.

Mr. WEIR : Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman will take no action whatever, and that hundreds of these unfortunate people may be sent to gaol without the Government interfering ?

Mr. SINCLAIR : The Government are not responsible for the present situation.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON : May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman accepts as accurate the statement in the Question that the proprietress declines to give access to the land ?

Mr. SINCLAIR : No, Sir ; on conditions, of course.

Mr. WEIR : Yes, 100 years' purchase.

Mr. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire) : Is not some temporary arrangement possible under which these unfortunate men may be released from gaol ?

Mr. SINCLAIR : That arises on a subsequent Question.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he has received a copy of the resolution passed by the Town Council of Dundee calling for the release of the ten Vatersay men now in prison ; whether he is aware that a large number of trades councils and other organisations in Scotland have passed resolutions to a similar effect ; and whether, in view of the persistent refusal of the landlady to make available land which is suitable for crofter cultivation, he will immediately have these persons released from prison.

Sir J. DEWAR (Inverness) inquired whether, in addition to the resolutions and petitions mentioned in the Question, the Secretary for Scotland had also received a petition, signed by practically every full-grown man in Barra, asking for a remission of these sentences.

Mr. SINCLAIR : I have received a petition with a very large number of signatures to the effect stated by my hon. friend. In reply to the hon. Member for Leicester I have to say that the answer to the first two portions of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative. In reply to the last portion I have nothing to add to my answer to the hon. Member for Inverness-shire on 17th June, that in view of the practice in such cases, and after consideration of the circumstances of this case, I have come to the conclusion that it is not my duty to advise the Crown to remit any portion of the sentence awarded.

Congestion in the Island of Lewis.

Mr. WEIR : I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that at a meeting of the Lewis District Committee early this year the chairman stated that there were at present cottars and squatters in the Island of Lewis, representing with their families a population of 7,200, who held no house or land and paid no local or other rates, this number being nearly one-third of the landward part of Lewis; and, seeing that the Scottish Office in a letter to the Lewis District Committee, dated 15th February, 1904, indicated that the only way of dealing with the difficulty was by a scheme of voluntary migration to the mainland, will he state why the terms of some such scheme have not yet been put before the cottars of Lewis.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I refer my hon. friend to the reply given on 2nd June. The Landward Committee are engaged in making the inquiries therein referred to.

Mr. WEIR: I got the same answer months ago, and meanwhile these cottars are starving. When may we expect a scheme?

Mr. SINCLAIR'S reply was inaudible.

Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland what length of time has elapsed since he entered into communication with the Board of Agriculture with a view of advising the Foreign Office in its negotiations with the North Sea Powers for closing the Moray Firth against trawlers; what progress, if any, has been made; and whether he expects an agreement will be arrived at; and, if so, when.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Active communications with the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries are in progress and it is hoped that an understanding which will permit the line of action contemplated by my hon. friend will be reached.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): Until the closing of the Firth is carried into effect will the right hon. Gentleman give equal rights to British fishermen?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I have announced the decision come to on the subject.

Continuation Classes for Scottish Students.

Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of Clause 9, subsection 1, of the Education (Scotland) Bill, whether the work of county committees, who have hitherto provided technical education for evening students, will in any way be interfered with by the compulsion on school boards to make suitable provision of continuation classes for the further instruction of young persons with reference to the crafts and industries practised in the district.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The duty laid upon school boards by Section 9 (1) of the Bill will make the provision of continuation classes by the secondary education committees unnecessary, and it is not contemplated that these committees should themselves act in future as managers of schools or classes.

Migration of Scottish Crofters.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that under Section 4, subsection (*d*), of the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897, the Board are empowered to take steps for aiding migration of crofters and cottars from congested districts to other districts in Scotland, and settling any migrants under favourable circumstances in the places to which they first migrate; will he state whether the Board have exercised these powers, and, if not, will he say why this has not been done.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The Board have not exercised their powers but are prepared to give any suitable suggestion their best consideration. The difficulties are two-fold: (1) To find opportunities outside the congested districts for such migrants to settle with the concurrence of all persons concerned; (2) to find crofters and cottars at once both desirous to migrate and possessed of the requisite qualifications.

Mr. WEIR: The matter is always being considered, yet nothing is done.

Sale of Trawled Fish.

Captain WARING (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether it is his intention to introduce a Bill to apply to the rest of the United Kingdom the prohibition now existing in Scotland against landing or selling trawled fish; and, if not, what are his reasons for altering his decision.

MR. SINCLAIR: I can only refer my hon. friend to my reply on 18th March to the hon. Member for Dumbartonshire, when I stated I could give no undertaking at present as to legislation in this direction.

Orkney and Shetland Education Grant.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state what sum on the basis of a total grant of £436,500 for Scotland would have been granted to Orkney and Shetland, respectively, under the scheme illustrating the proposed mode of distribution of grant under Clause 14 (2) of the Scottish Education Bill, and on what grounds it is proposed largely to reduce the said grants and completely change the Bill.

MR. SINCLAIR: A statement on this subject, which is not one that can conveniently be disposed of by way of Question and Answer, will be made in Committee on the Bill.

Education Grant for Ireland.

MR. J. MURPHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he is now in a position to state the amount of the additional grant for primary education in Ireland; and when will the supplemental Estimate be presented in connection therewith.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The amount of the proposed Supplementary Estimate for Public Education, Ireland, is £114,000. The Estimate is before the Treasury, by whom it will be presented to the House at an early date.

Licensing Compensation.

MR. YOUNGER: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, as all old on-licences are to cease at the end of fourteen years, the freeholder of on-licensed premises let on a lease of which more than fourteen years remain unexpired will be entitled to share in any compensation awarded under the provisions of the Licensing Bill, 1908, if the licence is suppressed as redundant during the currency of the reduction period; and whether, if he is not so entitled, the leaseholder will, nevertheless, if the lease has less than sixty years unexpired, be able under the Third Schedule of the Bill to deduct a percentage of the compensation charge from the rent paid to the freeholder.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The freeholder of licensed premises is a person interested in the premises, and therefore one of the persons amongst whom any compensation money may be divided by the licensing justices unless he comes within the exception made by Clause 11 (1) (*a*) of the Licensing Bill. That exception is based on no deduction being made from rent, and therefore the Answer to the second half of the Question is in the negative.

*MR. YOUNGER: Arising out of the right hon. Gentleman's statement that the freeholder is entitled to share in the compensation, is the House to understand that in the opinion of His Majesty's Government a recognisable interest in the continuity of an old on-license will endure after the expiration of the time-limit?

MR. ASQUITH'S reply was inaudible in the Press Gallery.

Seats for Ladies under the Gallery.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if his attention has been called to the fact that the seats under the gallery formerly occupied by strangers are seldom, if ever, used by Members; and if, in view of the inadequate accommodation in the Ladies' Gallery, he will give the House an opportunity for discussing the expediency of allotting these seats for the use of ladies visiting the House.

MR. ASQUITH: It is obviously undesirable to subtract anything from the limited accommodation now provided for Members of this House. The seats under the gallery were provided in substitution for those removed behind the Speaker's Chair, and I am not aware that it is the fact that they are not used by Members.

Mr. BYLES asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would remember that the House only contained at present half as many seats as there were Members.

*Mr. REES: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that on late nights, when young Members of the House for physiological reasons must have sleep, that particular dark corner is much used and appreciated?

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask the Prime Minister whether he was not in Hyde Park yesterday?

Mr. ASQUITH: I do not know that the last Question strictly arises out of that on the Paper, but if the hon. Member wishes to know, I was not.

The Indian Budget.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can yet state the approximate date of the introduction of the Indian Budget.

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir. I cannot yet fix a day for the Indian Budget.

Scottish Land Legislation.

Captain WARING: I beg at the same time to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been drawn to a resolution passed by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture on 17th June, petitioning the Government to remit to a Joint Committee the various Bills dealing with Scottish land now before the House, with a view to arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the question; and whether, having regard to this resolution and the representative character of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, he is prepared to state what steps the Government will take in respect of land reform in Scotland.

Mr. ASQUITH: I have seen the resolution to which my hon. and gallant friend calls my attention, but in view of the action taken in another place with regard to the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill which is no longer before either House, I am unable to see that the course proposed by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture is one that could be adopted with advantage. With regard to the final paragraph of the Question, I have already stated that His Majesty's Government do not see their way to take any further steps in regard to Scottish Land Legislation during the present session.

Mr. YOUNGER: As there is a conference going on with regard to education, why cannot one be conveniently started about land?

Mr. ASQUITH's reply was inaudible.

The Bestowal of Peerages.

Mr. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will give an opportunity for discussing the Motion in the name of the hon. Member for East St. Pancras relative to the right of the House to question him with regard to the advice given by him to the Sovereign in respect of the bestowal of peerages and other honours?

Mr. ASQUITH: The answer is in the negative.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Then may I ask you, Mr. Speaker, having in view your ruling of 11th July last, to which I was referred by your instruction, whether it is not a fact that it is the undoubted right of every Member of this House to question the Prime Minister upon the advice given by him to the Sovereign in his capacity as Prime Minister upon any subject whatever?

*Mr. SPEAKER: It rather depends on what meaning the hon. Member attaches to the word "question." If the hon. Member limits it to asking Questions at Question time, I say, No; if he means to extend it to criticism at the proper time, raised in the proper way, I say, Yes.

The Scottish Estimates—The Barra Cottars.

Mr. P. W. WILSON (St. Pancras S.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether his attention has been directed to the fact that ten Scottish cottars from the island of Barra, described by the sheriff of the county as respectable, reasonable, intelligent, courteous, and even kindly in their manner, are at the present time undergoing sentences of two months imprisonment as the result of their attempt to cultivate a few acres of land; and whether he will make personal inquiries into the conditions which led these cottars to attempt this cultivation, with a view to securing a remission of the sentence and an immediate alteration of the law.

Mr. ASQUITH: I am well aware of the circumstances of this case. As the matter to which my hon. friend calls my attention will no doubt be discussed by the House in Committee of Supply on Thursday, perhaps he will wait until that day for a full statement of the position of the Government.

Mr. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): May I ask whether, in view of the fact that only one day has been allotted to the Scottish Estimates, the right hon. Gentleman will give a day to the discussion of this Vatersay case, or two days to the Scottish Estimates?

Mr. ASQUITH: We will see what progress is made on Thursday.

NEW BILLS.

MILK CONTROL (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To amend and extend existing legislation relating to the Milk supplies of the rural and urban districts of Scotland," presented by Mr. Watt; supported by Sir Andrew Torrance, Mr. Findlay, Mr. M'Callum, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Charles Price, Mr. Sutherland, and Mr. Halley Stewart; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 14th July, and to be printed. [Bill 274.]

SEED POTATOES AND SEED OATS SUPPLY (IRELAND) BILL.

"To make provision with respect to loans and sales made for the purpose of the Supply of Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats to occupiers and cultivators of land in Ireland," presented by Mr. Birrell; supported by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 275.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir **William Brampton Gurdon** reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act (1887) Repeal Bill): Mr. William O'Brien; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Edward Barry.

Sir **William Brampton Gurdon** further reported from the Committee; that they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C: Marquess of Hamilton, Mr. Lonsdale, and Mr. Staveley-Hill; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. Moore, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. MacCaw.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings on the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill, if under discussion at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 294; Noes, 96. (Division List No. 128.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armitage, R.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.

Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'rHamlets,S. Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,SirJ.H. (Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,CH (Sussex,E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, SirJ. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.
Glendinning, R. G.
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey,W. E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lever A. Levy(Essex,Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire,Wirral)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan,Patrick A.(Queen's Co.)
Menzies, Walter
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Murray,Capt.HnAC.(Kincard.)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Philipps,J.Wynford (Pembroke
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G.Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel

Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lupton, Arnold
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, John (Lancashire
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson A Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Order for the Second Reading read.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I must remind the House that last year and the year before the bank to bank Eight Hours Bill was read the second time with unanimity. The effect of the Bill was apparently considered so harmless that the leaders of the Opposition were not present on either occasion. The only representative of the Front Bench in attendance was my hon. friend the Member for North Ayrshire, who on both occasions denounced the Government for what he called their dilatory tactics of referring the economic side of the question to the consideration of a Departmental Committee. These two Second Reading discussions were not academic or tentative or preparatory debates. The Government had accepted the principle of an eight-hours day for miners and were pledged to legislate. No serious attack or criticism of their Bill really occurred—apart from the coalowners—until February last, and then at the eleventh hour a storm arose. Why? There came into being the Coal Consumers' League, a somewhat intangible body representing everybody in general and nobody in particular, which since that time has taken an active part in bye-elections. I have said from the first that the establishment by law of an eight-hours day for miners, with regard to its form and method, was a complicated and even anxious task. I have had on more than one occasion to represent both the Government and the Opposition myself, and I say frankly that, in my opinion, up to a certain time the country was not sufficiently alive to the importance of this question. This being not only a political, but a national question, I have taken occasion when receiving an influential deputation of coalowners in January to make the remark that the consumers generally did not show the interest in this question which, in my judgment, it deserved. The result was that the consumers were called into being as agitators. I have received a great many deputations in opposition to the Bill; but I found that few of the speakers have read it; still fewer have read the report of the Departmental Committee, because their arguments were based largely upon a Bill which was not the Bill of the Government. They have estimated that a certain limitation of output would produce an effect on prices of 1s. 6d. or 2s. per ton, and said the effect of this on the country would be most serious. I knew that myself. The question really is whether this Bill now being discussed would have the effect of limiting the output, and, if it limited the output, what would be the effect of the limitation on the price of coal? But I had the advantage when receiving these deputations of hearing the views of a great many men of experience and knowledge of the trade and industries of the country, of hearing the opinions of mine-managers as to the practical effect of the Bill on the working of coalmines, and of consulting the inspectors of mines. All this, in conjunction with the continued study of the report of the Committee, had a certain effect on the Government view of the case, as the House will see in a few minutes. Passing to the Bill as it stands I will only mention three points in it. First of all, it provides eight hours from bank to bank with one winding time excluded, giving an average time of employment of eight hours below ground; it provides secondly, that there may be sixty hours overtime per annum—a provision which has hardly been noticed, but which is of particular importance; and, thirdly, there is a provision which enables the Government to suspend the operation of the Bill in the event of great national emergency. I proceed to consider the effect of the Bill first on production and prices, and secondly on safety. The Committee was perfectly impartial. No one has challenged either its competence or the accuracy and wisdom of its report. The Committee has found that the reduction in aggregate hours underground by the operation of the Bill as it stands would be for all classes underground 10·27 per cent.; for hewers only 6·2 per cent.; and for underground workers other than hewers 13·72 per cent.; or, if the net time productively spent underground only be taken as the basis of the calculation, hewers only 7·64 per cent.; underground workers other than hewers 15·62. Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis, on behalf of the coalowners, formed an estimate that the consequential reduction in output worked out in arithmetical proportion would be 25,750,000 tons per annum. The committee did not accept that estimate as reasonable, for this reason. The average working time actually put in by all classes of workers amounted to forty-three hours thirteen minutes per week, or 13·33 per cent. less than the theoretical full time. They think that a portion of this 13·33 per cent. of time lost to production under present conditions would be utilised under an eight-hours system. They think also that there would be a further mitigation of loss by increased energy on the part of the men. There is good reason for saying that. Mr. Hann, one of the best witnesses before the Committee, gave it as his opinion that the South Wales men working at the face would be able if they were pressed to produce 10 per cent. more than they did at present. The Durham and Northumberland hewers working shorter hours produce more coal per man per hour. Again, on a short day the percentage of output per man is higher than on a full day. For this I am quite aware that there are technical explanations. There is more filling and clearing on a short day than on other days; but experts are agreed that when men got down for a shorter time they wish to make their work more productive, and the output per man on the shorter day is proportionately higher than it is on a longer day. The Committee also think that some of the estimated loss will be recovered by mechanical equipment, by new shafts, and by bringing up cast shafts now used for ventilation into use for winding. They also attach importance to the increased use of coal-cutting machines and conveyors. They count also, to some extent, on the extension of the multiple shift system in working, and they think that by the improved conditions and economic pressure stimulating the existing flow of labour from other areas and industries into the mines still further ground would be made up. On that point I would remind the House that it has been constantly said that one of the chief difficulties confronting us on this question is the limited supply and reserve of men; but last year no fewer than 48,000 men joined the collieries as underground workers, the total number of workers both under and above ground being increased by 58,000. This shows how readily the collieries now can draw upon other occupations and other trades for their supply of labour. I come now to the conclusion of the Committee on this matter, and I will quote it *in extenso*, because I agree that it is in some ways the central point of the discussion. The Committee found—

> "After giving all reasonable credit to these considerations, we are nevertheless convinced that the establishment of a fixed eight-hour day, whether introduced suddenly or gradually by annual reductions of half an hour, cannot but result in a temporary contraction of output, and a consequent period of embarrassment and loss to the country at large."
>
> "The extent and duration of this period will depend chiefly upon the intelligent and willing co-operation of both employers and workmen to reduce it to a minimum, both in the immediate interest of the public and the ultimate interest of the coal industry."

Now it is difficult to gauge and easy to exaggerate the effect of secondary factors in production and price. In all great trades where there is free competition the rise and fall in prices depend on the usual conditions of supply and demand; but the whole experience of the British coal trade goes to show that when, owing to excessive demand, prices reach an excessive figure, fresh developments in a very short time proportionately increase the supply capacity. It is dangerous to generalise too far either one way or the other, but I would call the special attention of the House to some figures in this connection. The thesis of the opponents of the Bill is that limitation of hours decreases output, and consequently produces a rise in prices. Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis, in a deputation, quoted an article in *The Times* of 1st January, 1894, which had been written to show the disastrous effect of the federation strike of the preceding year and the loss to the country of a diminished output of 20,000,000 tons of coal. As a matter of fact, the actual decrease in 1893 produced by the strike was 17,461,000 tons. That was not a gradual decrease such as might be produced by the Bill we are now considering. It was a sudden and drastic decrease, due directly to the strike. I have looked up the prices preceding and following the year of this strike, and quoting from tables issued by the Board of Trade last year giving the average value per ton of coal produced, I find that in 1892 the average price was 7s. 3¼d., and in 1893 it was 6s. 9½d. That was the year of the strike; and, of course, it will be said that you might expect to see the result of the strike on prices subsequently. In 1894 the price dropped from 6s. 9½d. to 6s. 8d., and went on dropping until 1896. Suddenly, by the operation of the strike, 17,500,000 tons of coal were withdrawn from the use of the country and yet the price of coal continued to fall. ["No."] Yes, during those years. ["No."] I am giving the average figures. I quite agree they are largely founded on contract prices, and I am quite aware that during the strike if a man wanted coal during the strike it was a difficult thing to get it, and he had to pay a far higher price. I am quite aware of that, but I am giving for what they are worth the official figures of the average price of coal for the year 1893 and for subsequent years, and so far as these figures are concerned they show outwardly no effect on the coal prices on which the great commercial demands of the country were supplied. Then it may be said, as it was a falling market, the withdrawal of this coal held up prices, but did no more. Very well, I go on. In 1898 there was another strike, and for five months South Wales was idle. I have stated that the fall in prices touched bottom in 1896 at 5s. 10¼d. I give now the shortage produced by the strike in South Wales, amounting to 5,560,000 tons of coal, and I turn to prices. In 1897 the general average price was 5s. 11d., in 1898 the price was 6s. 4½d., a rise of 5¼d., in 1899 it rose to 7s. 7d, that is a rise of 1s. 2¾d. So it may be said that in a rising market, and the coal market was rising in those years, there is the effect of limitation of supply. But if you say that, the answer to it is this, that in the following year when there was no strike or limitation, the price rose from 7s. 7d. to 10s. 9¾d., a rise of 3s. 2¾d. So that, at any rate, for what it is worth the average scale of prices does not seem to connect the sudden withdrawal of a large mass of coal with a consequent rise in price. The figures I have quoted may not cover exceptionally high prices at the pit's mouth for a sudden order, but they do refer to the great coal contracts of the country on which the great railway and shipping industries and manufactures generally depend. It is said that the limitation of output will tell disastrously on the coal export trade. I examine again the case of the strike in 1898 in South Wales. That strike produced a very heavy reduction in output of 5,560,000 tons, and, as it is the chief centre of the coal export trade of the country, it might have been expected to have some disastrous effect on the export trade; but, as a matter of fact, foreign buyers found they must have British coal, and as they could not get it from South Wales they got it from elsewhere in England and Scotland. The figures for export coal were fully maintained and, in fact, showed a slight increase, so that although there was this 5,000,000 tons suddenly withdrawn from South Wales there was no visible effect on the export trade. The Committee went into this question with great care, and their conclusions are to be founded in the Report. The upshot of it really is that British coal has a very strong hold over distant markets, but if there is any considerable advance in prices, that would injuriously affect our trade with nearer ports. That is the main general conclusion. The central point of the whole matter is in the question whether the Bill will in fact effect a reduction of output, and if so to what extent, and to what extent prices would be affected. I accept the finding of the Committee that the Bill as it stands would mean a period of embarrassment to the country at large. Now, I pass for a moment to the question of safety. Very likely some of my hon. friends below the gangway will not agree with my view. But I have a special responsibility in this matter and accidents in coal mines when they do happen are serious. A limitation which is unduly sudden may produce, probably will produce, some danger. There is in the first place the question of accidents in shafts. Ninety-eight persons were killed in shaft accidents in 1907, or 7·87 per cent. of the whole number of persons killed in mines under the Coal Mines Acts that year. Accidents in shafts generally are fatal. Under Clause 4 of the Bill inspectors have to approve reasonable winding times. It may be said that that ought to be sufficient to secure safety in winding, but in my opinion it is not by itself adequate. There may be delays in the working of the coal through men being late through the state of the weather, or some accident to the machinery; some cause or other may lead to delay in the arrival of the men at the pithead. Then there may be the danger of haste and consequent accidents either on entering or leaving the cages. Or again there may be accidents from speeding the winding too much. At present the speed of winding up and down reaches frequently a speed of forty miles an hour, perhaps sixty or seventy when a certain point in the shaft is reached. That is a terrific pace, and it is easy to see how some catastrophic accident might happen. Then men wishing to get coal more speedily in the shorter time at their disposal may hurry their work of timbering or spragging. Similarly the management may hurry other essential processes necessary to the safety of the mine. There is some risk if you impose, as I say, an unduly sudden limitation upon the hours that accidents may occur from the causes I have specified. I do not wish to exaggerate the danger, but I cannot pass by the definite testimony of inspectors and managers, and I am bound to say that their representations on this point have had a considerable effect on my mind. To mitigate this danger, and to provide against the period of anticipated loss, we have decided to move an Amendment in the Committee Stage. I will now tell the House what we propose to suggest. At present the Bill proposes that there shall be a nine-hours stage of eighteen months duration to precede the operation of an eight-hours day as defined in the Bill. We propose to substitute for this stage a period of five years, during which the hours of work shall be eight hours with both windings excluded, so that during five years the hours of employment to the average man would be eight and a half hours daily, and at the end of the five years the time will be reduced by one winding, and the Bill as it stands will come into force. I am aware that mine-owners do not like "two bites at a cherry." It may be said that if an eight-hours day is to come, they would rather have it at once in preference to the periods which have been suggested in different Bills that have been before the House. I have had no opportunity of ascertaining their views on this particular proposal, but, of course, their view has been founded on the very short periods suggested in previous Bills and in the Bill of the present year. Instead of one year or eighteen months, we propose a substantial period of five years. I will proceed to state the effect of this change upon numbers affected and upon production. The Bill as it stands, on an eight hours one winding basis, would affect 77·33 per cent. or some 534,000 men and boys. The Bill as we propose it, with two windings excluded for five years will affect, as I calculate on the tables supplied to the Committee, 69·15 per cent., or some 478,000 of all the underground workers in coal mines. Of course the effect will vary according to the district. In some it is very small no doubt—twenty minutes or less on an average per man. But with both windings excluded the Bill will undoubtedly have a very distinct effect where it is most wanted, and the reduction, for example, will be — in the Manchester district, 1 hour 2 minutes; in West Lancashire, 1 hour 13 minutes; in the Midlands, 56 minutes; in Cardiff, 1 hour 24 minutes; in Swansea, 1 hour 13 minutes; in Monmouth, 1 hour 27 minutes. The effect in Durham and Northumberland will be very considerable, for, speaking generally, if under the operation of the Bill they reorganised themselves into two or more eight-hour shifts for all workers, it will mean that the hewers may have to work rather longer hours, but, on the other hand, the transit hands and boys will come down from ten hours to eight and a half.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): What about Scotland?

*MR. GLADSTONE: I can give the figures for Scotland according to my calculations, and they are very carefully worked out on the figures worked out by my hon. friend's committee. In the east of Scotland the decrease for all classes underground will be twenty-one minutes, and in the west twenty-seven, while in North Wales it will be fifty-two minutes. I will now deal with the question of the reduction in the aggregate hours of work underground. I have already given the House the figures presented by the Committee in relation to the eight-hours day with one winding excluded, and I have the figures for the eight-hours day with two windings excluded. Now, the reduction of aggregate hours for all classes underground on an eight-hours day, with both windings excluded, will be 5·38 in the place of 10·27; for hewers 1·03 in place of 6·20; and for underground men other than hewers, 9·04 in place of 13·72. These figures relate to theoretical full time, but allowances must also be made for colliery stoppages which arise from a variety of causes, such as slack trade, accidents, strikes, deficiency of wagons, and so forth, which the committee estimate at a possible loss of 7·24 of the whole full time. In the second place, allowance had to be made for the voluntary absenteeism of the men, which is estimated at 6 per cent. of the possible full time, and further allowance is required for the sixty hours per annum of overtime. This power to work overtime will be a considerable relief in districts where there is exceptional business at some seasons and slackness at others. If you spread it over the whole year you will find that the sixty hours is practically equivalent to fourteen minutes per man per day, and that in itself is a very considerable modification of the alleged hardships under this Bill. If the House would work out the 5·38 reduction of hours to a 5·38 deduction of the output, they will see to what a very small degree the limitation of output will reach. I maintain that it is only reasonable on the findings of the Committee to assume that by reorganisation and by the saving of time in the number of ways I have indicated, the capacity of general production can be raised to at least an equivalent of its present amount. In these matters we have had prophecies of ruin on numberless occasions. The Ten Hours Act was going to ruin factories; it did nothing of the sort. In 1872 when the Coal Mines Act was passed, preventing any colliery from being worked with one shaft only, the expense was put on employers of sinking a second shaft in many cases, and it was said that it was going to ruin the coal trade. It did nothing of the kind.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Who said so? I never heard it said.

*MR. GLADSTONE: My hon. friend may never have heard it said, but still, he has not heard everything in this world. There may be loss or inconvenience in some cases and in some collieries, particularly in Durham and Northumberland, where, however, they have had a very long time to prepare for this business, and I say with confidence that under these limitations the output capacity will in a very short time be raised very considerably above its present limits. Now I come to the question of what is the reason for this Bill? [Ironical OPPOSITION cheers and cries of "Votes."] I will give my reasons for it, and if hon. Gentlemen who cheer so loudly are not satisfied, perhaps they will ask the noble Lord the Member for the Chorley division or the late Under-Secretary for the Home Department why they support the Bill. I have no doubt they could give the reason. The noble Lord the Member for Chorley could give a very full answer, but if they are not satisfied I would refer them to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has voted for the Eight Hours Bill, and whose illustrious parent is a keen supporter of the Bill, and has been for a great number of years. I am not going to argue on the abstract ground that it is an interference with adult labour. Hon. Members opposite have passed by that stage.

AN HON. MEMBER: No.

*MR. GLADSTONE: The hon. Member does not answer for the whole of his Party. I have known something of hon. Members opposite for a good many years in the House, and will tell them why I say what I do. When the railway men came to hon. Members opposite and asked for shorter hours they were received with very considerable sympathy by the Conservative Party.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): On the ground of public safety.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I have heard of safety before. They did not tell the railwaymen to rely on strikes, but immediately appointed a committee to inquire into their hours, under the presidency of Sir Michael Hicks Beach. If you are not satisfied with that there is the case of shop hours, which is an interference with adult labour which was not in the interests of safety. Was the Ten Hours Act in the interests of safety? You cannot say that that measure does not interfere with adult labour simply because it limited the hours of women and children. That argument is a mere quibble. Everybody knows that it was a direct interference with adult labour, and has been so down to this day. There may be one or two, like the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, who maintain on this question, as on many others, the Tory position, but the bulk of the Conservative Party have again and again consented, practically and directly, to interfere with adult labour, and a great many of them have voted for this Bill. There is a reason for the interference with adult labour in this case. Special claims can be urged on behalf of miners. It is very severe labour; that is not denied. Other labour is severe, too, but where can you find in any class of labour followed by great masses of men in this country the conditions that accompany the work of a miner? There is the darkness, the loneliness, the danger, the discomfort of working continuously in a high temperature. It is forty years since I went down my first mine, and three or four months since I last went down one. I know what it is in the working faces, where there is not a direct current of air, but where the air is stagnant and grows foul. [Laughter.] This high temperature is not a matter for laughter.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is it worse than the House of Commons?

*MR. GLADSTONE: When men are once down a mine they cannot leave until they are wound up. It is not like a workshop or factory, where a man can get out if he is unwell. Hon. Members must realise for themselves what this work means and what the conditions are day by day. I wish I could send them all down a mine, and make them work for the reasonable hours of ten a day of which the hon. Member opposite is so proud. I would undertake to say that before the week was out they would all sign a petition in favour of this Bill. There is the constant anxiety due to the incessant watchfulness necessary on the part of every responsible man in the pit. They have to watch the roof and to look out for the signs of danger whether from fire or the inrush of gas or water. Does that responsibility exist in any other great industry in the country? Can you blame the men for attempting to obtain easier conditions? I say, taking the hours worked by men and boys in South Wales, Monmouthshire, Lancashire, Durham and Northumberland and elsewhere, they are ten and eleven below ground, and are far too long.

I pass now to the question of accidents. I take the question of accidents before I come to health. The danger to the miner stands first in all trades except that of the seaman. I am often told that the danger to railway servants is very great. So it is in certain occupations. What is the percentage of accidents in the case of railway servants? It is 7·77 per 1,000. In the case of miners it is 12·82 per 1,000. Last year there were 1,099 fatal accidents below ground, and 5,149 non-fatal accidents. Nobody, at any rate, will deny that the miners' trade is a dangerous trade. I pass now to the question of health. The right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, speaking incidentally on this matter, mentioned to the House that the occupation of coal mining is a very healthy one. It is not, and I will tell the House why. I have said a great deal in praise of my hon. friend's excellent Report. If I have one criticism to offer upon it it would be on that part which relates to health. [OPPOSITION cheers.] I quite agree that you may say that I am quoting it when I wish, and that I exclude it also when I wish. I will tell the House why I think that the views of the Committee as regards health were not conclusive. It was only an incidental part of the Report, and the Committee contented themselves practically with taking the mortality figures, without taking evidence on all the bearings of the subject. Now, Sir, in passing I note that already the

Workmen's Compensation Act Schedule contains three special industrial diseases from which miners suffer. There is antylostomiasis. There is also nystagmus which is comparatively common. It is well known that the miner's eyesight is frequently impaired, but that does not count, I suppose, in the minds of hon. Members opposite. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh!" and "Withdraw."]

*MR. SPEAKER: I do not think a remark of that sort should be made.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I withdraw entirely. I hope the House will understand that I did not mean to offend. I daresay that my words were not well chosen. I meant to say that hon. Members opposite, relying upon mortality figures, have not considered, or rather have ignored, this particular disease, which, in fact, is a very serious one as anybody who is familiar with mining knows. Then there is a third disease known as beat hand and beat knee, which is also put in the same category. It is not specified in the mortality tables, but it does afflict miners, and frequently compels them to retire from coal-mining. Coming to the figures, I wish to point out to the House why it is that their mortality between twenty-five and sixty-five is slightly below the average of all occupied men above ground. If you look at the figures in regard to young men and old men the case is different. Taking the case of all occupied males between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five the death rate per 1,000 is 3·41. The death rate of miners is 3·83. If you take the ages between fifteen and twenty the mortality of all occupied males is 2·44, and of miners 3·20. Now I come to the other end of life, and this is an important matter. The average mortality of all occupied males above sixty-five years of age is 88·39. The average mortality of miners is 139·82. [AN HON. MEMBER: How many of these men work in mines?] I give you the figures as stated in the Returns of the Registrar-General. Perhaps you will take his figures for this purpose. The numbers employed above sixty-five must form a sufficient basis. I take it that otherwise they would not be presented.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): May I ask how many hundreds of miners over sixty-five are actually working in mines?

*MR. GLADSTONE: A good many.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS indicated dissent.

*MR. GLADSTONE: If that is so, why are they not working when over sixty-five years of age? It is because the work is so hard that they are worn out. You cannot have it both ways. I have given you the figures showing the mortality of miners who are working in collieries over sixty-five. [MR. WALSH: It is 1 in 17.] My hon. friend knows what he is talking about, and obviously if it is 1 in 17 that would give a considerable basis for these figures. The fact of the matter is that this work tells upon the men, and they suffer for it in their old age, and that there are not more old men working in the mines is due to the fact that you must have strong men in the mines, and that when they reach a certain age they are unable to go on working in the mines as they might do in other avocations. The Committee found that in Derby, Nottinghamshire, where the hours are below the average, miners' mortality is the lowest, and that in Lancashire, where the hours are the longest, miners' mortality is the highest. I say this—and this is my contention in criticism of my hon. friend's Report—that the mortality figures are no real test. Miners are picked men. First of all, they do not send boys to mines who are weak; they send the stronger boys to the mines, and a further weeding goes on in the case of boys and young men. The mortality figures prove that in the case of boys and young men employed under ground a process of weeding goes on, and when you get to the age of twenty-five you have the pick of the men who are the strongest. Strong men and boys are required for work in a mine, whether it is in hewing, timbering, putting, or as a haulier, or whatever it may be. You have operations which constantly require considerable strength, and men and boys who are not physically strong are not fitted for the job. Now I ask the House to remember that when these miners become from accident or illness physically weak they leave the mines, and they get into occupations in other directions above ground, and then when they die their deaths are credited to these occupations, and the miners are, therefore, credited with a specially low death-rate. I have only one more illustration to give to the House to show that the mortality figures are no real test. I will take the figures in relation to the Metropolitan Police, though I do not attach any importance or weight to them. The death-rate between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five per 1,000 is 1·73; between thirty-five and forty-five it is 1·6; and from forty-five upwards it is 0·63. These figures are perfectly valueless for general purposes of comparison, because in the police force you have men who must be physically fit, and if they are not physically fit, they leave the force and retire on their pensions. You cannot test health of policemen by mortality statistics, and I say also that you cannot test the health of coal miners by the tables of mortality. I hope we shall not hear much more of this ill-founded argument. I have only one more point, and I have done. It bears on the question of foreign competition. The general tendency in foreign countries is to impose a limitation of the hours of labour in the case of miners. Already in France, Austria and Holland, you have laws passed limiting employment underground, and you would have had laws passed in the United States of America, if it had been possible under their constitution to pass such laws; but you have in America an eight hours day prevailing in many States, and the average working day of the American miner amounts to eight hours thirty-nine minutes. In Belgium a Committee has been appointed to consider a limitation of hours in mines. The German miner is under labour regulations which are very strict, and the Government has already by law limited the miners' hours where health requires it. [OPPOSITION cheers.] Where health requires it. If hon. Members deny that health requires a limitation of hours, they will oppose the limitation. The German Government have now passed a law prohibiting the employment of miners for more than six hours where the temperature exceeds 82° Fahr. Everybody knows that that temperature is reached frequently in our mines. If the German Government is right in imposing that limitation, are we wrong in saying that the conditions of health require the limitation. The hours worked now in Germany are shorter than ours. If this Bill passes, as I hope it will, it will lead to a further limitation of hours in other countries. One can see from what takes place at International Conferences in connection with the mining industry how an advance in this direction by this country will be a great stimulus to Governments in other parts of the world. I have now come to an end. The Second Reading of this Bill was carried in 1893 by a majority of seventy-eight, in 1894 by a majority of eighty-seven, and in 1901 by a majority of thirteen. In 1906 the Second Reading was carried by a unanimous vote, and in 1907 also by a unanimous vote. It has been supported at one time by as many as forty-nine Unionist Members. The support of this Bill was not limited to one side of the House or the other. I see my hon. friend the Member for North Ayrshire who will give his testimony as a supporter of this Bill for three years in succession.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I only supported it as an humble individual.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I attach great importance to the support of my hon. friend as a humble individual. The right hon. Member for Bordesley has voted for it; the right hon. Member for East Worcestershire has also voted for the Bill, and I hope we shall have the support of the right hon. Gentleman to-day. The right hon. Member for the City of London, the Leader of the Opposition, has not yet got as far as to vote for the Bill. During the last seven years this question has been debated on five different occasions, and I think that in each case the right hon. Gentleman's name does not appear in the division lists. At any rate he has no very pronounced or conclusive views against this measure, and I trust that we shall get from him, at the least, the benefit of an open mind. I pass to the right hon. Gentleman for West Birmingham. He has paired or voted three times for this Bill and never voted once against it, so far as I know. But he has done more: he has given his most emphatic and powerful testimony on behalf of this Bill. In 1892—and I ask the attention of hon. Members opposite to this on account of their respect for his views, however little respect they may have for mine—the right hon. Member for West Birmingham said—

> "I say that, in my opinion, there will be no such decrease in the output as some persons imagine; and I think that the fear of a decrease is altogether exaggerated and largely imaginary."

Again—

> "It is desirable in the interests of humanity that the ordinary miners' day should be eight hours."

And again—

> "I do not think it is either a patriotic, a prudent, or a politic act for any of us to advise the miners in a direction which will infallibly lead to strikes and to industrial war."

Not content with this speech the right hon. Gentleman enshrined the eight-hours proposal in his social programme. The importance of that, among other things, is this—and I commend it to the notice of the noble Lord opposite who has a Motion on the Paper for the rejection of this Bill—that when the late Lord Salisbury's attention was drawn to this matter, and to an allegation that was made that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham had put forward proposals that were not in consonance with the views of his chief—in 1895, Lord Salisbury, when Prime Minister wrote with regard to these proposals (of the right hon. Member for West Birmingham) that—

> "More than once he had expressed approval of the principles involved in them."

We may, therefore, claim that even the late Lord Salisbury had expressed in this form approval of the principle of the Eight Hours Mines Bill. Well, Sir, for twenty years there has been patient and strenuous agitation in favour of this measure, and I do not believe that Parliament can or will reject the opportunity of settling this question which has disturbed the mining community for long. It is a guarded and moderate Bill. It will not imperil the working of the mines. It does not threaten the interests of the mine owners. It imposes no appreciable burden upon the consumers. It is a long-delayed concession to the reasonable demands of a vast body of men whose courage, steadfastness, and skill are second to none in the industrial organisations of the country.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor), in moving the rejection of the Bill, said that the right hon. Gentleman had told them that this Bill had been constantly discussed during the last twenty years, and he ventured to think that no other subject had been discussed with so little knowledge as to the true facts of the case as this Bill to limit the hours of labour in mines to eight hours. The right hon. Gentleman himself, so far from challenging this, urged in the House in 1906 that ever since 1890 the debates had necessarily taken a somewhat academic shape; and that every side of the question had never been before any neutral or impartial authority. On the strength of that opinion the right hon. Gentleman instituted a Departmental Committee to inquire into the whole question. But the Departmental Committee only reported late last year, and although the right hon. Gentleman told them, on the last two occasions on which this Bill had been discussed on a Second Reading, that it was not now an academic discussion, he ventured to think that the Report of the Departmental Committee had entirely altered the conditions under which this question had been discussed, and that, until the Report was issued, there were no reliable data on which to found a measure that would settle the question. He thought the Home Secretary wise in postponing the full operation of the Bill for five years after it has passed, thereby acknowledging that when it came into full operation there would be considerable dangers connected with it; and he could well imagine that he would then be rather somewhere else than in the post which he now occupied. The right hon. Gentleman had also stated, somewhat ironically perhaps, that the opponents of this Bill represented everybody in general, but nobody in particular. Well, he was perfectly willing to stand there to represent everybody in general and nobody in particular. A prominent Member below the gangway stated some time ago that the supporters of this Bill "had to contend with the capitalist." With all due respect to him, he ventured to traverse that statement. If, as he hoped later on to prove, this Bill resulted in an increase of price, not only proportional to the direct loss of time, but partly to the reduced supply and the effect of panic, then, although many of the smaller and weaker collieries might be crushed out of existence, still the stronger and bigger would certainly reap their share of the increased price, and, to this extent, benefit by the action of the Bill at the cost of the consumer. The struggle, then, was not between the miner and the mine-owner, but between the mining industry and the rest of the community. He was supported in this view by an explicit declaration of the Departmental Committee. In the Report of that Committee they state—

> "It is quite conceivable that a situation might be created by an enhanced price of coal, following the enactment of an eight hours' law for miners, in which the immediate economic interest of employers and men engaged in the production of coal alike might be opposed to the economic interest of the country at large."

He had very carefully studied the Report of this Committee, and he would base his opposition to the Bill very largely—he might do it entirely—on that Report. On page 57 he found the true relation between the miners and the community at large clearly and lucidly set forth, and as that relation went so thoroughly to the root of the whole matter, he would quote a few paragraphs in which it was described by the Committee. The Report said—

> "In no other country in the world is so large a proportion of the people engaged in manufactures, or so dependent upon the export of its manufactured goods for its supply of raw materials, and for the food of the population, and in no other country are its manufacturing activities so completely dependent upon the supply of coal produced within its borders.
>
> "It is evident that all our industries are ultimately as completely dependent upon British coal for their existence, and all workers in those industries for their living as are the owners and workers in collieries themselves, and that in any change which would restrict supply or greatly enhance the cost of coal, their interest exceeds that of the direct producers in the proportion in which their numbers and the magnitude of their operations exceed that of the coal owners and miners."

That was the root fact in the situation. The community had, in order of importance, though not in order of time, a prior interest in coal to the interest which either owners or miners had. Coal was not only one of the great prime necessities of rich and poor alike, but it was especially the very pivot of British commerce. Consequently, Britain was the last country in the world which could afford to make a rash experiment with its coal industry. It was absolutely vital to all that the cost of winning coal must be kept sufficiently low to enable the general trade of the country to be carried on at a profit against the competition of the world. Therefore, the first point which they should vividly realise was that the burden of proof lay, not with the opponents, but with the proposers of the Bill. The Home Secretary acknowledged that a rise of even 9d. per ton would have a serious effect upon industry. He had dealt in his speech that day entirely with the question of panic causing an increase in the price of coal; but would he say that in introducing this Bill he had absolutely assured himself that no such rise would take place apart from panic, and if he had, would he give the House the evidence on which such assurance was based? He was told that the real authors of this measure—the leaders of the Miners' Federation—gave little, if any, assistance to the Departmental inquiry. They appeared to have not even sent any accredited witnesses on their behalf. They seemed to regard the case for the Bill as so self-evident that no inquiry was necessary. He ventured to think that no reasonable man who had carefully studied the Report would hold any such view, whatever might have been his opinion when he opened it.

The Report bristled with statements and admissions of the difficulties of the case. Here was a statement pointing out the peculiar nature of the trade and the effects of a sliding scale connecting the rate of wages with the price of coal—

> "The rate of wages is based, not on the price of labour in the labour market, but the price of coal in the coal market."

If that were the case, surely the miners had every incentive to promote legislation which would raise the price of coal to the highest point that the public, which must have the coal, would be willing to pay for it. And if that were so, they were entitled to look with considerable caution and suspicion on proposals emanating from those who had such a patent and big axe to grind. The Report went on to say that an eight-hour day, whether introduced gradually by annual reductions of half an hour or suddenly, would result in a temporary contraction of output, and a consequent period of embarrassment and loss to the country at large, and it further said that it was by no means an axiom as it is in physics that action and reaction are equal, and that, should the production of coal be reduced and prices raised to such an extent as to cripple or remove from the country other industries, a temporary cause might be found to have a permanent effect. Here a temporary reduction of output might very easily produce a rise in price. The House would remember that between the years 1898 and 1900 coal went up from 6s. 6d. to 16s. a ton and never went back to its original price. Again, between 1905 and 1907, coal rose from 7s. 6d. to 12s. and had not now got back to its original price. In the early seventies it went up 14s. In the early nineties gas coal went up 6s., and steam coal 16s. All these rises were at times when the demand was in excess of the supply. It was stated very clearly by Sir George Livesey that this high price was caused, not only by shortage but fear of shortage, because dealers bought in anticipation of a shortage and because coal was a prime necessity of industry. The Report arrived clearly at the conclusion that there would be a decrease of production and an increase in price. The vital question was the amount of these changes. It was manifestly difficult, and perhaps impossible, to represent by exact arithmetical figures the size of them. But they had this—that the Report of the Committee arrived at the conclusion that there would be a loss of time of something like 10 per cent. The miners had an object in keeping up the prices or keeping the output down. The percentage of output would thus approximate the loss of time. That would be the loss on output, but how about the increase which had nothing to do with shortage of supply or panic? The hon. Member for the Ince Division of Lancashire had pointed out that, of course, the men would require the same wages as now, and that they would work shorter hours, and estimated this increase at 6d. a ton, but therein omitted standing charges. He (Mr. Mason) had taken the figures and worked out what it would come to in a particular mine if they included these general charges, and he found it came out at about 1s. 1d. They had the opinion of the mineowners and manufacturers on what the cost would be, and it was given as 1s. 6d. or 2s. a ton on coal, and as it took three-and-a-half tons of coal to make one ton of steel, it put 5s. to 7s. a ton on steel. If they attached any importance to the opinion of business men, there was not the slightest doubt that the increase on the cost of getting the coal would be considerable. He had given some quotations of actual increase of cost due to sudden shortage in the past on three or four separate occasions during the last thirty-five or forty years, and those increases had been very remarkable. Therefore, it would not be imprudent to suppose if the output was reduced by anything like 10 per cent, and that was what seemed to him would be about the amount of the reduction, then there would be an increase in price beyond the increase in cost, which he thought they might prudently put at 5s. It had been on former occasions 9s. 6d. in one period of two years, 14s. in another period of two years, 13s. in another.

Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Glamorganshire, Rhondda): Will the hon. Gentlemen explain so that we may intelligibly follow him at what stage that will occur, at what period that price would be made.

*MR. J. F. MASON said that in his opinion it would be general over the whole period, not at any particular period. The mere shortage of supply wherever there was a shortage of supply of any article must increase the price enormously, simply because there would be greater competition to get the limited supply. He thought his estimate of this panic increase was very moderate. The estimate of the actual increase on the cost apart from panic was on the one hand 2s., as estimated by the coal owners and manufacturers, and, on the other hand, 6d., as estimated by the miners themselves without including general charges.

MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince): May I ask the hon. Member——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. It is impossible that this debate should ever end if this interruption goes on.

*MR. J. F. MASON said they had also the figure of 5s. a ton, his estimate of the temporary increase due to shortage, and which, if it were maintained for one year, would throw on the consumer between £50,000,000 and £60,000,000, a burden approaching that of our whole indirect taxation. In addition to this there was the permanent burden, which, if the figure of 2s. were accepted as the increased cost, would amount to nearly £25,000,000 a year, and if the miners' figure of 6d. were taken, which admittedly contained nothing beyond mere wages, would throw a burden on the consumer of some £6,000,000, or nearly 3s. per head of the population. He was quite willing to admit that approximately one-third of our coal was exported, and, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, in the past, in spite of the prices, the foreigner had always taken his full share. So far as that coal was concerned, in his opinion the foreigner would bear the burden. Free traders, however, said that the foreigner did not bear the burden, and never would. If so, the loss would fall on the consumers of this country to the extent of a temporary burden of from £50.000,000 to £60,000,000 and a permanent burden of from £20,000,000 to £25,000,000 if they took the mine-owners' view, per year. He ventured to suggest that the Government should pause in their progress with this rash and foolhardy scheme, and make sure they fully realised the dangers that were involved to the community at large, and when they had made perfectly sure they had realised them all, that they would legislate in accordance with the evidence of their own Committee, and not in direct contradiction to that Committee's Report. No one could suppose that this year, a time of falling trade, was a time when the people of this country could afford any considerable increase to the cost of coal, steel or ship building. The miners certainly were well paid, and they worked fewer hours per week than in other industries.

AN HON. MEMBER: They earn all they get.

*MR. J. F. MASON asknowledged that the country owed much to its miners, but it paid much to its miners, and they ought to beware of doing injustice to the many in a fit of kindness to the few. After all, the total number of those who were supposed to be asking for this legislation, and they knew they were by no means unanimous in their demand, was some 900,000. What about those at whose expense this concession was to be granted? Not only would this burden fall upon all the rest of the 44,000,000 inhabitants of these islands, but there were special classes which would bear special imposts, who in themselves numbered more than the miners. The iron trade alone occupied over 1,000,000 men. Why should 1,000,000 iron-workers be fined to raise the wages of 900,000 miners, and perhaps worse than fined? There was an estimate by Sir Hugh Bell of the effect of this Bill on the iron trade, according to which this bonus to the miners would mean the street for 30,000 or 40,000 men in the iron trade, and destitution to 150,000 or 200,000 persons dependent on them. Again, why should such industries as paper-making be penalised? Why should 6,000,000 people, of whom 4,000,000 belong to the working classes, pay 2d. more for the gas they consumed to make a miners' holiday. This industry was interwoven, not only with the carrying on of every other industry, but with the very life of the country as a whole. Such mercantile supremacy as this country enjoyed was dependent on her manufactures and her shipping, and, as hon. Gentlemen opposite were never slow to point out, these depended for their prosperity very largely on an abundant supply of raw material close at hand. But coal was the raw material of every industry, as steel and iron were to many, and certainly to shipping. A permanent burden on the cost of coal and on the production of iron and steel, a burden from which there is no escape under the Bill short of abandoning the industry altogether—a permanent burden of that kind would be far more injurious to the trade than any tariff they could put on. There was a very significant sentence in the Report of the Committee, which said that our industries must buy fuel at a local price and accept for their product an international price. It seemed strange to him that a Government whose gospel was free trade, whose idol was the consumer, should have brought in such a measure as this which was protection of the worst kind, and which thoroughly protected a particular class at the expense of the whole community. Judging from the speech made by the Home Secretary to deputations at Downing Street, this Bill was hardly before the House on its own merits, but was the result perhaps of great Parliamentary pressure. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out to one of the deputations that waited upon him that—

> "They might criticise anything they pleased on the part of the House of Commons, but they had to recognise a certain movement of public opinion, and that when that opinion reached in Parliament a certain point, it was impossible to withstand it."

That meant that they had only to press the Government hard enough, and if they had enough support behind them they would get what they wanted, not because the Government thought it was politic to grant it, but because the Government believed it was impossible to withstand the pressure. But the Government did not know whom they could withstand until they tried, and he hoped the Home Secretary would not be allowed to carry out this perilous and dangerous adventure against the interests of the community. He ventured to register his humble but emphatic protest against the way in which this matter had been entered upon by a responsible House of Commons. Many hon. Gentlemen had given pledges to vote for this Bill before there was any Report which gave any adequate information on the subject. They pledged themselves in absolute ignorance of what the effect of their action would be. There was really nothing in the Bill to support it on its merits. It was impossible of general application. It was admitted that the exceptions to its application would be enormous. That was the first objection. Then there was the fact that the organisation of the miners was a powerful organisation, constituting at once the temptation and the condemnation of the Government which had given way to that organisation, because it was strong and because the Government was weak. The miners had power already to achieve without the assistance of this House any reasonable amendment of their lot. He very much doubted whether the miners, who had asked for this measure, themselves realised what effect it would have on others than themselves. It was an absolutely new thing, and there was no analogy to it anywhere else in the world. In France a so-called Eight Hours Bill was introduced in 1905. The right hon. Gentleman himself had pointed out that that Bill was full of limitations, and that "it was too soon at present for any safe deductions to be made from the working of the Act." But Germany and the United States, who were our real competitors, had not adopted this kind of legislation. And protected countries could compensate themselves against a burden of this kind in a way in which a free trade country could not, because it could counteract an increase in the price of raw material by a corresponding duty on the finished article. This Bill was unsupported, therefore, by any analogous experience elsewhere, its effects were unrealised by the bulk of those who so loudly and selfishly clamoured for it. It was introduced obviously because of the pressure brought to bear on the Government who were probably torn by secret pangs of penitence for having tied it round their necks. It was dreaded by all responsible men in the commerce of this country, and was detested by the people. For this Bill the Government now asked for a Second Reading. He begged to move that the Second Reading be postponed.

Mr. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) said he did not propose to support the rejection of the Second Reading of this Bill on the same grounds as his hon. friend who had moved its rejection, but he had no doubt that under this measure every interest of the country would be penalised, and there would be no alternative but to impose a general tariff on all manufactured articles to make up for this impost on this raw material. That was a prospect which he, as a free trader, viewed with alarm and deprecated most strongly. He also opposed the Bill because it was an interference with adult labour. The right hon. Gentleman had said he did not go into any of the questions of the right to interfere with adult labour because that objection was a thing of the past. What with the measures brought before the House to control labour, to regulate the hours at which men were to get up in the morning and to go to bed at night, and the way in which they should wind up their watches, and the extension of the franchise to women—the Prime Minister and his predecessor were both advocates of female suffrage—there would soon be very little freedom left to men. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that this Bill had been passed several times by the House of Commons, but he forgot that on the occasions when it was read a second time it was a private Member's Bill, and was brought in on a Friday, when very few of the Members of the House were present.

*Mr. GLADSTONE: I think there are hon. Gentlemen sitting on the opposite Benches now who voted for it.

Mr. LAMBTON said there was a deputation of the representatives of consumers in February with regard to this Bill, and the right hon. Gentleman said that the Bill had been ordered to be printed on 20th February, and how could any opposition be brought to bear until the Bill was printed?

*Mr. GLADSTONE: The Bill was printed last year. I introduced the Bill at the end of last session.

Mr. LAMBTON said that the right hon. Gentleman introduced the Bill for consideration last autumn.

*Mr. GLADSTONE: No, not the same Bill.

Mr. LAMBTON said that the right hon. Gentleman referred the Bill to Grand Committee.

*Mr. GLADSTONE: No, no.

Mr. LAMBTON withdrew that point. He represented the Durham miners, a fact with which the right hon. Gentleman had twitted him, and the reason why he was opposing this Bill most strenuously, and would do on every possible occasion, was that the right hon. Gentleman had deliberately informed the House that the Durham hewers would have to work longer hours. That was a matter for the Durham miners to consider. They had had an official assurance from the right hon. Gentleman that if this Bill passed they would have to work longer hours.

*Mr. GLADSTONE: I said that if the multiple shift were adopted under this Bill it might result that the Durham hewers will have to work longer hours.

Mr. LAMBTON said that the right hon. Gentleman's words were rather stronger than that. He did not say that it might, but that it would, result in the hewers having to work longer hours. The right hon. Gentleman then went on to refer to the restriction of hours, and said that any reduction of output might be remedied by the introduction of machinery, coal-cutters, and improved appliances of that kind. But did the right hon. Gentleman think that matters of that sort were neglected now? The fact was that advantage was taken of every possible machine to reduce expense and quicken output. The one desire of the managers of coal mines was to obrain the maximum output with the minimum cost. Naturally, therefore, every sort of machinery for cutting or any other operation connected with coal mines was introduced. The right hon. Gentleman had said there would be no difficulty in getting men into the coal mines of the country because 48,000 had flopped into the industry last year. A few minutes afterwards he had drawn a pathetic picture of life in the coal-mines, and asked the House out of pity to pass this miserable Bill which would not help many miners. The Home Secretary had made out no case for the Bill. In regard to the conditions underground in which the men had to do their work, in that House he had always endeavoured to support the interests of the men of his mining constituency. The right hon. Gentleman had told them of the horrible life in the mine, and of the foul conditions under which the work was done; yet at the same time he brought in this Bill and told the Durham hewers that they would have to work longer hours in these horrible conditions underground. In the county of Durham the hewers numbered 50 per cent., and their hours were thirty-seven and a half per week, and under this Bill they would not be less but longer if they were to receive the same wages. Then 25 per cent. worked forty-seven hours, and it was quite true that the boys worked longer hours. That had always been regretted in Durham and Northumberland. He saw the hon. Member for Wansbeck Division in his place, and he knew that this subject had been discussed for twenty years or more; and he had heard the hon. Member say that this work for boys in the mines was not unhealthy. He had heard him say that time after time. The hon. Member had himself worked as a boy in the mines, and all could see that he was a very fine speciman of a man. As to these boys, he thought 9 per cent. of the total employed in the mines were under sixteen. They worked fifty-two hours a week in the Durham mines, and boys over sixteen worked fifty-four hours. Most of these boys when they reached the age of twenty-five or thirty became hewers, and then they worked only thirty-seven and a half hours per week. Then again many of the boys underground within five years became hewers; therefore, the Bill would benefit 25 per cent. of the boys employed in the mines of Durham and Northumberland, and would put 50 per cent. of the hewers, the most important men, in a worse position, leaving 25 per cent. as they were. Yet the right hon. Gentleman asked them to pass a Bill of this sort, but as far as he could gather he did not very much like it, for he understood from his exposition that afternoon he proposed to postpone the operation of the measure, which was to be such a boon, for five years. Why was the Bill brought in in such a hurry if five years must elapse before it was put into operation? The right hon. Gentleman had told them that in 1893 there was a decrease of 17,000,000 tons of coal owing to strikes, and he had gone on to show how the price of coal went back in the next two years. In South Wales the price of coal went up very considerably in 1898. In the one case the price went down owing to strikes, and in the other case the price went up. In the argument on the coal tax, it was pointed out that the coal mines of Northumberland and Fifeshire sent 81 per cent. of their output abroad. It was proved over and over again that if they lessened the demand for coal by the imposition of that tax many of the pits in Northumberland would have to be closed; the same thing was said of Fifeshire, and also of Durham, a large portion of the coal from the mines of both counties being exported. The whole argument against the coal tax was that if they lessened the demand they would diminish the production which was necessary for the proper management of the pits. The right hon. Gentleman told them that it made no difference whether they produced the coal or not. He had asked that question of a manager of one of the Durham pits, and he had told him that the cost per ton underground under this Bill would be increased at least 3s. 6d., and other expenses would be increased by 1s. 7d., while the output would be reduced 300 tons a day. The right hon. Gentleman did not take that into consideration. He had the figures in regard to two old pits in Durham, the working of which could not be changed or altered in the way suggested.

These pits had been working for over fifty years. He was told that in No. 1 pit if they worked eight hours, the output of the colliery would be reduced 37 per cent. and the cost increased by 2s. 1d. a ton. In No. 2 colliery the output would be reduced 50 per cent. and the cost increased by 2s. 9d. per ton. About 250 hewers would have to be dismissed if there were two shifts of eight hours. He was also informed that there would be additional expenses in regard to horses and haulage, etc. The right hon. Gentleman talked about these hewers being able to make up time, as they were to be allowed to work sixty hours in the year overtime, which meant about thirteen minutes a day. Then he told them that in the counties where there were shorter hours of work the output was greater and more efficient. But that was a voluntary arrangement; that was not brought about by Act of Parliament. In this Bill they had a hard and fast rule by which sixty hours would have to be worked during six days of the week—work at high pressure during the whole of the time. Why should not the miner have a week end as well as anybody else? Under this Bill he would have to work every day of the week. They reduced him to a machine. There was no justification for the measure. He could not conceive why the miners of the country asked for it. He had been told that theri reason was that it would perhaps raise the price of coal, and thereby increase their wages. That would be very pleasant to the miners no doubt, but would it be fair to the consumers of the country? If Parliament interfered in this way by bringing in a Bill by which the wages of the miners would be raised, they would be asked why should they not interfere in the case of other industries. The miners should be free to make their own bargain, and they should not be reduced to the position of a machine. There was no justification for this interference with the labour of men who were fairly well off. The right hon. Gentleman had drawn a picture which was exaggerated because he had to make some sort of a case. He did not wish to say anything offensive, but he thought that the case was the poorest he had ever heard made out. It was the duty of every hon. Member, if he thought a measure was wrong, to tell his constituency so, and not ask what cause would get him the greatest number of votes. He honestly believed that the Bill was absolutely unnecessary in the interests of the county of Durham and that it would do his constituents harm; therefore he would have much pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the question to add the words 'upon this day three months.'"—(*Mr. J. F. Mason.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. RUSSELL REA (Gloucester) confessed that he regarded the Bill, as introduced by the Government and as printed, with some apprehension. The considerable alteration which his right hon. friend had announced that he intended to make, in his opinion, improved the Bill on the whole, but it was not wholly an improvement, as he thought he would succeed in showing later on. With the principle of the Bill he had no quarrel. He was in hearty sympathy with it. He had voted for it again and again, and hoped to do so again that night. It was in fact too late for the House of Commons to contest the principle contained in the Bill. Parliament had committed itself to that principle beyond possibility of recall, without an unexampled act of self-stultification. Not this Liberal House of Commons only, but the last Conservative House of Commons also affirmed it by unanimous votes. They were pledges which had fallen due for payment, and no Government could fail to acknowledge its obligations to redeem them. The only question remaining for the House, unless it was prepared for what he had called an unparalleled act of self-stultification, was how to apply the principle they had so often affirmed without damage, or with the least possible damage to the public. That was the Parliamentary position of the question as he understood it. The reference to the Committee of which he had the honour to be chairman, was based on the assumption that Parliament had decided in principle upon an eight-hour day for miners, and neither that broad question nor any question of policy was submitted to them in any form. It was to investigate and report, not to advise, that his right hon. friend appointed that Committee. In alluding to the Committee perhaps the House would permit him to express the regret felt by every member of that Committee, and for himself more than regret, personal sorrow, for the loss of their colleague, Mr. John Crombie, the late Member for Kincardineshire, and, excepting himself, the only Member of this House who served on that Committee. It was a regret he was sure every Member of the House would share, especially every Scottish Member over whose consultations he presided. The Committee made a careful investigation of the question of an eight-hours day in its economic and social bearings, and the results of that investigation were in the hands of hon. Members. They were not asked to make recommendations, and they made none. They were asked to ascertain facts, and weigh them, and state the conclusions in the spirit of scientific inquirers, not of politicians. That spirit they endeavoured to maintain, and whatever material they might have contributed to assist hon. Members to form their judgment on the question now before the House, they expressed no judgment on its merits themselves. The Report received the unanimous assent of the Committee, and it was signed by every Member without reservations. But now his position was entirely different, and in giving his opinion on the eight-hours question as a practical political proposal, he must of course be understood as speaking for himself. In all debates in that House the question had been discussed solely from the point of view, or rather he should say, from the divers points of view of the miners on the one side, and of the mine-owners on the other. That was far too narrow a survey for Parliament to take of a matter of so great importance. There was a third party to be considered—the nation and the national industries, and the employment and comfort of the whole population. He had heard it maintained in former debates that it was a question entirely between employers and employed. In no country in the world was the population so dependent upon its manufactures for its means of existence as in this country; in no country in the world were its manufactures so dependent upon coal as a source of power; and no other country in the world was so dependent upon its native mines for the coal it used. All our industries were so completely dependent upon British coal for their existence, and all workers in those industries for their living, as were the owners and workers in collieries themselves. A measure which might restrict the supplies of coal or add much to its cost would, therefore, strike at the spring, not only of our industrial supremacy, but at our industrial life. Coal was the first necessity of our national industrial life. It was built up on coal, and on British coal. If this measure would cause a shortage, even a temporary shortage in the coal supply, to be followed by any considerable permanent increase in the cost of mining coal, it would be impossible to exaggerate its importance to the public. When he said a temporary shortage, he did not mean an inconvenience of a few weeks, or of a winter season. He meant a deficiency which it would take two or three years to make good. For in no other industry did it require three or four or five years to bring fresh capital into effective productive operation, and into no other industry was it so difficult to introduce fresh and untrained labour. A temporary shortage therefore would mean a coal famine of two or three years' duration. It was for the House to consider both the principle and the details of the Bill in the light of those possibilities. The effect upon price of a short supply of an article of prime necessity such as coal. experience showed to be out of all proportion to the extent of the shortage. At such periods it was found the buyer could not be shaken off by a high price. The householder must have his coal at any price, and dispense if necessary with his theatre or holidays. The manufacturer must have his coal whatever the price might be, or cease to manufacture. If such a period were prolonged, it would be possible for the employers and men engaged in the production of coal together to bleed white the other industries of the countries. Prices must rise until the weakest buyers succumbed. Those who could remember the year 1873 recollected a time when a small and temporary excess of demand sufficed more than to double the price of coal. A similar phenomenon, though not so acute in character, occurred in 1899 to 1900, and again last year. A shortage, such as took place in those years, acted as a severe check to the prosperity of periods of historic prosperity, but it affected the whole world. The demand exceeded the supply in all coal-producing countries alike. It did not affect England alone, and did not injure her relative position in competition with other countries. But the effect of a short supply produced by an eight hours law for this country, would be entirely different. It would affect this country and this country's customers alone, and might conceivably inflict an injury upon our industrial life in the hot competition of these present days, from which it might never fully recover. The great questions they must satisfy themselves upon before passing the Bill as it stood were two. Would it in fact curtail production, and produce a temporary shortage, with all the consequences he had described? And would it in fact so affect the cost of working coal mines as to produce a permanent enhancement of price, when an equilibrium between supply and demand had been re-established? Everyone would admit the national importance of these questions, the mining Members of the House not less than others. If he were now asked whether he had changed his mind since he entered upon the investigation of this question, as Chairman of the Committee appointed by his right hon. friend, he would answer at once that he had not. He voted for the principle of a limited day for miners before that time, and he should vote for that principle again. But he had learned that the introduction of it into practice must be cautiously attempted, and its operation watched and guarded, and in some respects limited; that there must be some elasticity, some exemptions, some exceptions. Hon. Members who had simply glanced at the general conclusions of the Committee would have gathered the main general facts relating to the situation with which they had to deal. They would have learned that the average full working day of the British coal miner at present exceeded eight hours by rather more than an hour; they would have learned how many days were not full working days, how many days the collieries in the year were idle, and how many days the men absented themselves from work when the pits were working. They would find that the average collier, although his full day's work exceeded nine hours, did not average an eight hours day for all the working days of the year, but considerably less—seven and a quarter hours; and they might be tempted to think the problem was easy, and the conclusion clear. They had only, they might say, to take off a little here and add a little there, and they would still have sufficient cloth to cut out their coat, with a little patching. In this way they might argue that the change effected by the Bill would be rather a rearrangement than a reduction of the existing working time, and that all the prophesies of serious inconvenience to the country by a short supply of coal were simply the usual trade clamour to which the House was accustomed from every trade which was at any time the subject of any legislative interference. No conclusion could be more erroneous or more dangerously misleading. The unanimity with which the colliery owners and managers from every district who gave evidence before the Committee maintained that a diminution of hours of the full working day would reduce output to a corresponding extent was not surprising, for the trade was very well organised, and the nature and effect of the evidence they were about to give had been carefully considered. All the districts sent up their best men, their most extensive employers, their most experienced managers, and the evidence of such a witness as Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis, a gentleman of the greatest ability and unrivalled knowledge, who was selected to represent the whole trade, was entitled to be received with great respect. It might be accepted that this evidence was not only honest but disinterested, for the witnesses were far too experienced men of business not to be aware that they as producers stood to gain largely, at any rate for a time, by anything like a coal famine. They one and all prophesied a shortage of supply which it was certain the House would not be prepared to face. The Committee, for the reasons set forth in detail in the Report, reasons the general validity of which were now admitted by the trade and the public, would not accept these gloomy prognostications as reasonably accurate forecasts of what would be likely to occur in fact; yet they could not resist the conclusion that such an eight-hours law as that which would have been enacted by the Eight Hours Bills which had formerly been submitted to the House, and read a second time, would have produced a short supply of coal which would have caused insufferable public inconvenience, and possibly disastrous consequences to the trade of the country. That was not the time to consider the details of the Bill, but it had three principal divisions to which he might be permitted to allude: first, its main principle, the limit put to the full day; secondly, the temporary and partial limitation of its restricting action in the case of certain classes of collieries; thirdly, the proviso giving the permanent exceptions of individuals from its operation. He should desire to see some modification in the direction of greater liberty and elasticity in all these points. First, as to the limit to the day, nothing was shown more clearly in the evidence given to the Committee than the very wide differences in the conditions of labour in the various colliery districts, and in the degree in which the industry would be affected in the various districts by the Bill, and that presented the greatest difficulty in its application, especially in the first instance. For example, an eight-hours day, if it were made an eight-hours winding day as his right hon. friend now suggested, would not affect Eastern Scotland, where they had such a working day already. It would scarcely affect Lanarkshire. But even such a day would present to Lancashire and South Wales a problem to solve which would require not only a reorganisation of their industry, but in many cases considerable and costly improvements and additions to plant if the output was to be anything like maintained. In that House they had heard much of Durham and Northumberland, and doubtless in those districts the measure would necessitate a complete reorganisation of the work of the collieries. But in his opinion the problem of maintaining the output under an eight-hours system in Northumberland and Durham was not one of nearly so great difficulty as it was in such districts as South Wales and Lancashire. It was in those districts the longest hours were worked at present, and he thought his hon. friend the Member for Ince would agree with him that in those districts the problem of the adjustment of the industry to the new conditions would present the greatest difficulties. Mr. Hewlet, the largest employer in Lancashire, informed the Committee that he required and exacted a minimum of ten hours work from the day men on full days, and that meant an average of nearly ten and a half to eleven hours underground for those men. It might be argued reasonably that that only proved the greater necessity of the measure for those particular districts. But they could not forget Lancashire as a whole in their regard for one class. In Lancashire and South Wales and Monmouthshire, and in a less degree in other districts, were collieries, mostly the older collieries, working up to the full capacity of their mechanical means of production; the shafts, the winding engines, and the haulage roads, were doing all they were capable of doing on their full working days, and they were occupied at full strain through a day of nine hours, and sometimes more, in winding mineral alone. The output of the collieries of that class—older collieries approaching the period of exhaustion, which it was not worth while to remodel and refit—would certainly be reduced in direct and full proportion to the reduction of working hours. It was chiefly in the interest of those districts and of the older collieries generally, as well as in that of maintaining our gross national product, that, while maintaining the principle of an eight-hours day, he desired to see a further modification of Section 2 of Clause 1, which limited the hours of the day, beyond that promised by his right hon. friend. He approved of the eight-hours day being counted as eight hours for the winding of mineral only, and excluding from it the time occupied in winding the men of a shift up and down, for the first five years; but he did not approve of the surrender of the nine-hours day, as defined in the Bill, for eighteen months—from 1st January, 1909, to 30th June, 1910. In the districts he had named and in various other parts of the country too, the first step under the Bill as it stood would be as difficult as the second, and the proposed Amendment of his right hon. friend would make the first step more difficult. In Lancashire and South Wales the hours from bank to bank, as stated in the Report, were nine and three-quarters and ten hours respectively. The House would see that it would be a serious and difficult matter to reduce from this figure even to nine hours on 1st January next, and much more to eight and a half or eight winding of coal. He would suggest to his right hon. friend that the former provision of a nine-hours day as defined in the Bill be maintained for eighteen months, and that his Amendment be applied to the succeeding three and a half years. Should the day be calculated as he suggested on the basis of the time occupied in winding minerals only, his proposal would stand thus: eight and a half hours for winding coal from 1st January, 1909, to 30th June, 1910; eight hours from 30th June, 1910, to 31st December, 1913, and afterwards seven and a half hours. This last definition of a day of seven and a half hours for winding mineral would, as the House was aware, be equivalent to an average of eight hours bank to bank for the men. He much preferred that the hours for winding minerals alone should be made the basis of the limitation of the day, and the time occupied in winding men both up and down excluded. It would conduce to safety if the winding of the men had not to be crowded into the limited period, it would enable the older men to get to their underground working places more at their leisure, and it would be easier upon the older collieries in which the winding of men was generally slower than in new pits. On the average it would make no difference in production whether they made it seven and a half hours for winding coal or eight hours for winding coal and men one way, but it would greatly ease the older collieries at the expense of perhaps a few minutes of winding coal in the newer and better equipped pits. He would certainly put down Amendments to give effect to these suggestions, and he hoped his right hon. friend and the House would accept them. It was the same kind of considerations which justified the temporary extension of hours in the case of certain collieries, which was the second part of the Bill to which he alluded—first, to secure the public against the chance of a rigid law producing a coal famine; and secondly, to give something like an equal chance of survival and profit to the older and less advantageously circumstanced collieries, as well as to those engaged in seasonal trade. Such a relaxation was a vital necessity for such collieries as the group of the Forest of Dean house-coal pits. He took those collieries not as an example of exceptional conditions which did not exist in other districts; there were many collieries in all districts in which there was a seasonal trade which would meet with exactly the same difficulties. He took the Forest of Dean collieries simply as a concentrated example of a condition which existed sporadically throughout the country. Consideration of the question as applied to their local circumstances induced the Forest of Dean house-coal colliers to abandon their demand for an eight-hour day, and appear by their authorised representative before the Committee to oppose its application to the Forest of Dean, in the form in which it was introduced into the House in former Bills, or even in the present form of the present Bill. Those collieries were old, approaching exhaustion, the seams were thin, geological difficulties were great, the underground workings were long, the trade was a seasonal one—in summer the pits worked perhaps three days in the week, in winter they worked six full days in the week, there were no holidays, no short days, and less absenteeism than in any other district in the country. In summer they worked an eight-hour winding and three days a week, but in winter they often put two hours more into the day. It was doubtless for such cases as this the temporary extensions were intended, and for such cases they were an absolute necessity. The only question was whether the provisions of the Bill were sufficient. At a later stage he would probably take the opportunity of suggesting that they were not, and proposing some duly safeguarded extension of them. The third principal division of the Bill was the proviso in Clause 1 dealing with the permanent exceptions to its operation, not of collieries, but of individuals and classes of individuals. With the general principle that the operation of the time-limit must be suspended in the case of any or all when questions of life and death were at stake, questions of the immediate safety of a mine or working, all agreed. That necessity had been recognised and provided for not only in the present but in former Bills. But the exceptions not of that kind, not occasional exceptions at all, but the permanent exceptions of some classes of men, necessary for the safe and regular working of a colliery, were not clearly enough provided for. Those men were not numerous and were not, with rare exceptions, engaged in the working or putting or hauling of coal. But it was quite necessary that some men should be permitted to be down the pits rather more than eight hours if all were to be enabled to work eight hours with safety, or even in accordance with the Mines Regulations Acts as they stood. This in principle, he believed, would not be contested by any advocate of eight hours, and he hoped not in detail when they came to consider the proviso of sub-section 3 of Clause 1. So far he had criticised the Bill solely in relation to the period of transition from the old order to the new—how to maintain our supplies and do justice to the various districts and collieries in the period which must intervene before the industry would be comfortably established on the new basis. Doubtless the time would arrive, probably more speedily than many alarmists imagined, when under the new conditions they would again see over-production, and pits idle for want of orders. It was to this future that his second principal question related: Would an eight-hours system be found to have permanently increased the cost of getting coal, and thus permanently raised the price in this country? It was this question which had disturbed the minds of the large coal users of the country, and had found expression by the many and influential deputations which had waited upon his right hon. friend to protest against the Bill. The members of those deputations, however greatly interested in the question of an abundant supply of coal at a reasonable price, were not specially qualified to form an opinion on the question whether an eight-hours law would in fact permanently greatly raise the price of coal, or if it would in fact permanently raise the price at all. They did not pretend to have any special knowledge of the question They based their case entirely upon the estimates of increased cost which were made by the colliery owners and managers and laid before the Committee. It could not be denied that the opinion that an eight-hour law would permanently increase cost was expressed with practical unanimity by the coal owners and managers. That increase they variously estimated from 8d. per ton to 2s. 6d. per ton, but the latter was not given by the single witness who named it as an estimate of a general increase, but only of a possible exceptional case. A permanent rise in price of even 8d. per ton was not to be contemplated with composure. It would mean a tribute from the people of this country considerably exceeding the late sugar-tax. But the House was accustomed to the prophecies of disaster and ruin from members of all trades which had been touched by any legislative control from the days when the London shipowners prophesied that the repeal of the Navigation Laws in 1849 would drive the Union Jack from the ocean, to the days of the extravagant estimates of the cost of the Workmen's Compensation Act, the ruin of the South African gold industry, and the passing away of the British brewer. Had the House attached too much importance to the voice of a trade it would have passed neither the Ten Hours Act nor any of the long series of Factory and other Acts of regulation which have made the lives of the workers in this country tolerable without injury to production or wealth. But he had better reason than these general considerations for distrusting the accuracy of even the more moderate estimates of increased cost. They were one and all made on the assumption of a reduction of output commensurate with the reduction of the hours of the full day. The more extravagant estimates might be rejected, for they actually calculated that having reduced production from 100 tons to say eighty-five tons it would cost more money to raise the eighty-five tons in eight hours than 100 tons in nine or ten. But the more moderate estimates were equally based upon the assumption of this mechanically calculated reduction of output, and the existing expenses of the pits spread over the restricted area of production. In the Report he gave the reasons of the Committee for rejecting this fundamental assumption. To accept it would do great injustice to the owners and managers themselves as much as to the men. It would be to assume that owners and managers would permit the appointed day for beginning the eight-hours system to arrive without having made any provision, any new arrangements, to meet it. It would be to assume that they would do nothing to increase their means of rapid production, that the laying out of the collieries, the underground roads, and haulage arrangements, the winding power and winding speed, would remain in all cases as at present; that they would not introduce labour-saving machinery, coal-cutters and conveyors; that they would not attempt to extend the double-shift system; that they would still permit two total stops in the day for repose as in Lancashire, and two short days in the week as in South Wales. It would be, in fact, to assume that one of the most intelligent and energetic classes of men in England had lost their energy and intelligence. That this assumption would be as false as it would be insulting was proved by the fact that some colliery owners had already made such provisions, and many more were engaged in making them in the expectation of a law such as they were considering. And to accept those estimates would be to do equal injustice to the working miners. It would be to assume that they would do exactly the same work in an hour, whether the number of hours was larger or smaller, an assumption which the experience of South Wales disproved; that they would require the same intervals for meals and rest with a shortened day as in the long day; that they would insist upon retaining their full number of holidays and short days; that they would voluntarily absent themselves from work in the same degree as at present, an assumption which the greater prevalence of absenteeism in districts where now the hours were longest gave grounds for doubting. In short, the assumption which formed the basis of these estimates did as great injustice to the men as to the employers. And in addition, these estimates assumed that the fund of labour available for work in mines was a strictly limited and fixed quantity, and could not be increased. That was the contention of many colliery owners, but the fact that for many years past the rate of the increase of the mining population had been at double the rate of that for the whole of the country, coupled with the phenomenal increase of last year, published since his Report was issued, proved that although the flow of labour into the mines was not so free and unimpeded as in many other industries, a steady stream of workers had gravitated to coal mining as the industry had expanded. All the considerations he had mentioned influenced the Committee to regard the apprehensions of the colliery witnesses as exaggerated, and their estimates of decreased production per man, with a consequent equivalent permanent rise in price, excessive. When the influences he had named had all been brought into play, he was disposed to believe that any permanent increase in cost which might be due to the operation of an eight-hour day would be very much less than even the smallest of the estimates submitted to them. But those influences could not be brought into play at once or quickly. And although they might suffice in the end to prevent any large increase in price, due to this Bill, they were not in his opinion likely to prevent an embarrassing and dangerous shortage of supply in the period of transition, unless the Bill was modified in the way he recommended. Upon the Bill as a whole he would earnestly appeal to the mining Members and those others who had fought so long for the principle to remember that they were fighting for a principle far larger than a mere eight-hours day for coal-miners; they were fighting for the principle of the right of the State to regulate and limit the liberty of the grown-up man to work as he pleased or as any other man pleased. They were fighting for this principle not for themselves alone but for the great army of workers behind them. They are leading the van of this movement, not because they were weak and most needed the relief and protection of the State—they were leading the van because they were the greatest, best organised, and politically the strongest of the trades. They would be well advised to think more of the great principle involved in the Bill than in how most to press its immediate application to their own advantage. In furtherance of this great principle they were asking the House to make a great experiment. It was surely the first consideration to make that first experiment successful. If that first step proved a benefit to the men directly concerned and an injury to none—if it proved the fears and misgivings of some who were opposed, and of many who were doubtful, to be groundless—it would then be easy to take a second step. But if to secure an immediate selfish class advantage they were to injure the comfort, the productive efficiency, and the employment of the people of this country, they would not only provoke a speedy suspension and repeal of their particular privileges, but would discredit for a generation to come the great principle of which they were the champions, and of which they must remember they were at this moment the trustees for the benefit of other and weaker members of the great community of the overworked.

*MR. E. EDWARDS (Hanley) said that in supporting this Bill he wanted to guard himself from the references of the Home Secretary as to what they did in Committee and simply speak with regard to the Bill itself, with which the House was tolerably familiar. The Bill, they were told, had been discussed again and again on Fridays, when not many Members were present, but during his short career in the House he had seen many important industrial measures discussed after eight o'clock at night when very few people were in the House. But in his opinion there was not a Bill that had received the assent of the House so often as the Miners (Eight Hours) Bill for the last thirty years. Hon. Members opposite had again and again gone into the division lobby in support of the principle. He called to mind many men who were not interested particularly in the coal trade who were in many divisions in support of the Bill during the last twenty years. He called to mind year by year distinguished men on the front benches who had given encouragement and support to it and spoken upon it, and the Miners' Federation to-day was grateful for the encouragement given by Lord Randolph Churchill and the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. They had fallen now on other times. The Home Secretary put a question to hon. Gentlemen opposite. He said: "Who has asked for this Bill?" That question was met by considerable cheering, whether ironical or otherwise, it was not necessary to consider. But the answer to that question was, the miners of England, the miners of Scotland, and the miners of Wales. They might be wrong, but the miners had supported it, and that was the answer to the question. In past years the Miners' Federation, numbering 600,000 men, were unanimous in coming to the House in support of the Bill. Surely, then, it would not be necessary to go over the ground of those twenty years and the speeches which had been made again and again inside the House. During that period many industries other than mining had tried the experiment of how far an eight-hour day increased the cost of the particular industry. He called to mind men in the iron-blasting foundries where they were working twelve hours a day and now were working three eight-hour shifts with great advantage to all concerned. They had been reminded that because they were a strong union they could get what they wanted by means other than the House. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill made a suggestion that it could be obtained by a strike. In the North it was admitted, and it had been said again and again, that the miners of the North had always felt that boys were at work too long underground. In the North of England they had the strongest union in the country and had been an example to most centres. But with all the strength of the union, and with all their friendly feelings to the Bill, they had not been able to achieve up to to-day what they were told was desirable—to give shorter hours for boys underground. It was because they felt it was impossible to compass this question without coming to Parliament that this Bill was drafted, and that they asked for it to be supported by the Government. Many of them had had experience as to what was meant by security by union effort. For a number of years they had met across the table to settle great industrial questions, and had so far always succeeded in settling them. But they had not been able to settle such a question as this, neither could they settle it except by resort to what everybody in the House would shudder to contemplate. On behalf of the miners he pleaded for a few hours more in favour of the discussion of the Bill rather than be driven to take the step of standing aside while men decided to strike to obtain the eight hours which the Government refused to give them. They were reminded, too, of the admission that had been made that it was a question of what would be the effect on the price of coal. No one had ventured to challenge it on the ground of its being a life of danger and other disadvantages. No one would suggest that eight hours was not enough for men and boys to be employed underground. Hour by hour added to the discomfort and the temperature of the mines of this country. In Germany and other countries they took the view that under great pressure it might be desirable to be less than eight hours in the mines. Continuously we had colliers to-day working under conditions of eight-hours shifts, but it was not wise to ask a man to work in a high temperature for ten and twelve hours a day. It was a mistake; he could not work. He might be there putting in his time, but he was not working. If the hours were shorter, the same result would be obtained. In 1872 the pits were working eleven hours a day. They were then brought down to eight hours. Much was said in those days, although the hon. Member for the Sleaford Division had not heard of it, and wanted to know by whom it was said—it was said in this House by many people that it would be the ruin of the industry, but the industry was not yet ruined. The fact was that, after the passage of that measure, in many districts within his own knowledge where coal was worked ten or eleven hours before, the adoption of the shorter hour had not added to the cost one bit. They were able to produce as much coal per man in the shorter hours as they were able to produce in the longer hours. The hon. Member who moved the rejection of the Bill had said it was difficult to suggest a figure which would represent the increased cost. He had always felt that where the question of cost was concerned it was not safe to trust to calculation, or to deal with the hypothetical question in that way. He knew that witnesses were heard before the Committee, and that when Members spoke of the mines they understood their own pits, but they had no experience yet of what would be the effect of the eight-hour day on those pits. A circular was handed to him recently in which it was stated that the increased price would be to the amount of 5s. per ton, but in a very large area with which he was familiar, controlled by a conciliation board, little more than 5s. a ton for a very long period during the last ten years had been the price obtained for the coal raised. Certainly less than 6s. a ton had purchased the whole of the coal produced in a year. During the last twenty years, or certainly more than half that time, 6s. a ton had been the average amount that has been received for coal and slack raised within the area. He was told now in the House that if an eight-hours Bill was put into force it would add another 5s. to that. Such a statement could not bear examination, and he was not responsible either in the House or in the country or anywhere for having made such a statement. It would not increase the price so much, and on behalf of the great mining federation he would say that the Miners' Federation was not responsible for any such statement. The increased charge might be something more than 3d., but there was far more truth in saying that it would be 3d. a ton dearer at the pit's mouth than that it would be 5s. That it might cost a little more at first in the early days of the change it was true, and that was an economic fact that the Miners' Federation has not overlooked, but it was not because of that that they are desirous to secure it at once. There were men who had grown so grey now that they were no longer employed, whose hope had been for years that they would get an eight-hour day, and now they were called upon to face the economic side of the question. The Miners' Federation were not unmindful of this obligation; they were not unmindful of the important part that coal plays in the whole of the industries; but with all their experience of the last thirty years they were satisfied that the application of the Bill to the coal mines of the country, in spite of all that had been said, would not have the disastrous effect upon trade which it was thought it would have by many people. They were discussing the question at a moment when crowds of men throughout the country were working only three days a week—at a period of great unemployment. He would not be true to himself if he led anybody to believe that they would accept any such suggestion as he made, but that there would be some disturbance in the trade was manifest; nevertheless, after all these years he hoped the Bill would now be passed. It was not a party question of any kind. He quite believed that all parties in the House had the feeling at any rate that miners' hours were unduly long, and that the time had come when they should be shortened. After all, they were a very important part of the community, and they found after years of bitter experience they could not realise their ideals unless they got some such Bill as this through Parliament. He did not know that the House was so anxious as to whether it should or should not pass a Bill of this kind as they were fifty years ago. He appealed to those outside who could scarcely understand what was the meaning of the life in the pit, shut away from all life half their lifetime, shut away from all social life for twelve or ten hours a day, or under this eight-hour Bill possibly a man might be underground nine hours a day. What he wanted the House to understand was, that a man was nine hours a day away from everybody. They were so special and peculiar a trade that he knew it was a little difficult to apply an eight-hour day to it in the same way that it could be applied to a factory, and it was because of that difficulty that they were anxious about the question of winding, although it was no part of the Bill. No man or boy should be kept below ground more than eight hours a day, and those who had toiled for many years, who had not had this eight-hours day, and who had been away from all the sunlight and life of the world for many hours, were looking forward to the passage of the Bill, because they were hoping for easier conditions, under which life would be more tolerable. The nation would not lose prestige or profit by conferring such a boon on the miners of this country.

*MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): I heard with great interest the speech of the last speaker, and I trust that I shall imitate him in tone, though I differ widely from him as to the conclusion at which I shall arrive. I propose to devote myself to the principles of the Bill, because the Home Secretary made an appeal to us that we should deal with the principles rather than with the details of this measure. I can assure the House that I do not speak here against this Bill as I do because I am an out-and-out advocate of the policy of *laisser faire.* I am not averse to State regulations of some industries where the general health and safety of the workers in them is concerned, if they be so powerless, weak and unorganised that they cannot themselves secure that safety and health without coming to Parliament for help. I say in principle the interference of Parliament ought to be jealously restricted to such cases and to such persons. In this Bill, the State is asked to depart from its function as the guardian of the safety and health of its subjects and to assume the functions or perilously near the functions of the grandmother. Let the House just consider for a moment what is asked of them by the supporters of this Bill. I admit that this trade is a dangerous trade, but I say that it is protected in a very large measure by the Coal Mines Regulation Act, and, if you desire additional precautions for the safety of those working underground your true course is to seek an amendment of the special legislation provided under that Act. I believe that at this moment there is a Commission sitting to consider such further regulations as will affect the safety of the workers. I am happy to say I have known the miners of this country nearly all my life. I was brought into particularly close relationship with them some twenty-five years ago. I say without hesitation that they are pre-eminent among all the working classes in the country for their health, their vigour, and their intelligence, and I think they are particularly fortunate in the organisation and in the regulations which protect them. I do not think anybody in the House who knows them will say I have over described their merits. Surely it is most remarkable to come, and, as I venture to say, in this unprecedented manner, and ask Parliament, a body most uninformed upon the details of the trade, to put them of all people in the world in leading strings under a hard and fast rule, when there are such infinitely varying conditions in the different coal mines of the country. The Government ask this House to say that out of 168 hours in a week there shall be an absolute prohibition for any miner in the country to work more than about forty. I do not say that that is a position which it is absolutely impossible to maintain, but it wants a tremendously strong case to support it, more particularly when you consider that ever since 1875 combinations of labour have been favoured by this House, and that by the Trade Disputes Bill every possible obstacle was swept away from the path of the combination of labour. The object of that, was that labour should face capital on equal terms so far as was possible. I think that it was considered, as a justification for those measures, that it is in the interests of trade and industry that those who manage it—both workers and employers—and those who understand its conditions best, should be unfettered in the power to combine. In the long run it is considered that that is in the interests of industrial peace. Now let the House for a moment consider what the situation is at the present moment. I have listened most carefully to the speeches made, and no case in my judgment has been made out for the dictation of Parliament in this matter. Let me tell the House what in my humble opinion is necessary to justify the dictation of Parliament in this matter. In the first place, you ought to have a substantially unanimous demand from the workers themselves; in the second place, you ought to have demonstration that this interference is necessary in the interests of the health and safety of the miners; and in the third place, you ought to show that the public advantage is consulted by the change which you ask Parliament to make. If these three postulates cannot be established, surely there is not an industry in the country entitled to come to this House and say "We fear strikes; we detest them. We think they are a danger and an obstacle to industry, and in order to save us from resorting in the last resort to such a method of industrial warfare we ask Parliament to undertake the responsibility which rests with those who are carrying on the trade and to dictate"—as I say with most imperfect knowledge—"the details and regulations which affect the trade." I think the Home Secretary perceived what difficulties were before him. He has stated that many on this side were pledged to the principle of the Bill, and that the debates upon this topic before had not been of an academic character. I have an extract from the speech my right hon. friend made at a date so recent as 1906, in which he said in terms that the discussion had been of an academic character.

*MR. GLADSTONE: I think the right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me. Of course, there were academic discussions up to 1906. What I said was that in 1906–7 they ceased to have that academic character.

*MR. LYTTELTON: The case the Home Secretary put before the House, and the case which justified the appointment of the Committee, was the general ignorance of the House upon all economic questions regulating the affair. I therefore think I may fairly say that we on both sides of the House awaited the report of that Committee with the greatest possible interest, and we have read it, I am sure, with instruction to ourselves. I do not think the Home Secretary put it too highly when he said that the findings of that Committee will be accepted by the Members on both sides of the House. Let me ask the House to what that admission leads. There is nothing shown in the Report with regard to the first postulate which I have ventured to lay down as to the unanimity of the workers in this industry for the reform now pressed upon Parliament. So far as I have been able to ascertain, it is not only notorious that this measure is not favoured by the miners of the Forest of Dean——

*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman does not desire to mislead the House. The point of overtime has never been put to the miners of the Forest of Dean, but they are all favourable either [to this measure as it will be, or as it is, or to the original measure. All are for legal limitation of hours. The whole matter turned upon the question of bank to bank. I stated last year what happened. The masters too are now favourable to it.

*MR. LYTTELTON: I accept what the right hon. Gentleman says, but I should be surprised if at a general meeting anything like unanimity was obtained. Nobody, at all events, would say that the miners of Durham and Northumberland are in favour of it. [Cries of dissent.] I am glad to hear it if hon. Members do say so. They will have an opportunity of speaking afterwards, but at present, so far as the knowledge before us enables us to judge, there is not only not unanimity, but there is nothing approaching unanimity on the subject. Furthermore, I understand that in South Wales—my authority is the representative of the employers who, in a deputation to the Home Secretary, said he did not think there had been a ballot upon the subject for many years, and he doubted if there had been one at all——

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM: You may take it from me that he is wrong.

*MR. LYTTELTON: Even if there were a far greater unanimity than in fact there is among the miners of the country, upon what solid footing do they stand? Even if they were unanimous and the public advantage was not consulted by this measure and they could not show that their health and safety was affected by the present system, then I venture to submit that they would have no case. I think the Home Secretary felt that, because, after he had exhorted us to accept the findings of this most valuable Report, he asked us on his authority to reject one of its most conclusive findings and one based upon figures which are not susceptible to criticism. It was necessary for the Home Secretary, and he felt it to be necessary, to establish that the health and safety of the workers were imperilled by the present system. The findings of the Commission, I would remind hon. Members, is that so far as mortality is concerned among miners it is 16 per cent. better than that of any other occupied workers, and 23 per cent. better than that of non-occupied workers. How did the Home Secretary endeavour to get out of that finding which is succeeded by the opinion, less important, but still very important, of the Committee, in these words—

> "Therefore, judging from the general statistical information available, the occupation of the coal miner cannot be considered an unhealthy occupation."

There is the finding. How did the Home Secretary seek to get out of that finding, which is a very important one, I think all-important, in the consideration of this case? I think he mentioned three diseases with very long names which I will not attempt to repeat, but one of them is, I believe, an affection of the eyes due to the angle at which the worker working on his side has to look up to his work. Another affects the knees and hands from the constant contact with the hard ground, and the other I will not further dwell upon because I understand that only one case so far has been established in Scotland, and no case whatever has been established in England. Here are the three diseases. Will any sensible man—I am sure no miners' representative will—get up and say that a reduction of hours by half an hour or an hour in the pit will have any effect whatever upon any of these misfortunes? I shall be surprised if anybody has the hardihood to say so. The real fact is that the Home Secretary did not attempt—he could not attempt—to show that there was any connection at all between these particular diseases and the length of hours which at present exists in the work of the mine. I think I have said enough upon the subject of health, because when you have, after all, a public authority, when you have the evidence of public statistics, when you have them examined carefully by a most able and judicial Committee, when you have a finding that the miners' calling is healthy, and that their vital statistics are superior to those of every class in the country, and when you are met by such arguments and facts as the Home Secretary has brought forward, I do not believe it is necessary for anyone further to labour the point. I say that so far from discharging the obligation which is upon the miners of this country to show Parliament that their calling is so unhealthy that there should be interference by Parliament with the hours which they work, they have not only totally failed to discharge that burden, but on the contrary those who affirm the contrary are able to establish it by overwhelming evidence. Let me now turn to the third point, which I trust I may treat without too much detail, viz.: whether this change is not disadvantageous to the public and to other industries. I think no attempt has been made to show that the finding of the Commission is untrue, which states that coal being a first necessity for manufacturers in this country, even if the price of it is doubled, most manufacturers concerned cannot reduce their purchases. That being so the very moment there is a deficit you have an increase of price far more than proportionate to that addition. There is a finding to that effect in the Report of the Commission, which I will not weary the House by reading, but which establishes that proposition beyond all question. The Home Secretary endeavoured by reading some columns of figures to displace that conclusion which we have before us on the authority of this Committee. I confess that those figures were not at all convincing to me. We have an uncontradicted statement made by as great an authority as Sir George Livesey. I do not think that because he was a protagonist in the great contest some twenty years ago that that disentitles him to be heard and to be heard with confidence, as I certainly hear him with confidence whenever he makes a statement of fact upon coal questions. He has pointed out—I am giving the figures from memory; I shall be corrected if I am wrong—that in 1872–3 there was a somewhat heavy deficit, though not so heavy a fall as would result from this measure, and the price of coal f.o.b. Tyne went from 6s. to 20s. In 1890 there was a rise in price over two years from 6s. 6d. to 12s. In 1900 in two years the rise was 6s. 6d. to 16s. I have quoted the Royal Commission and a Committee of this House as authority for saying that when there is a deficiency there is a much more proportionate increase in the price, and these are practical evidences given on the authority of Sir George Livesey that such a thing is not a mere conjecture, but has actually happened, and can be established. That, I think, establishes that not merely what the Commission has said is true, but it can be proved to be true by actual evidence. You have the further facts found by the Committee that in such industries as the iron and steel industry the price of coal enters to the extent of 48 or 50 per cent., and in the case of the shipping industry, where you have varying conditions of things, in the lowest case you have 25 per cent. as the proportion of the price of coal to the total cost of production, rising in the case of the best and fastest steamers to between 40 and 50 per cent. These are the cases of the shipping industry and of the iron industry. I am told, though I cannot give these figures on my sole authority, that in the cement industry this proportion is as large even as in those which I have mentioned. If this is so the Committee are surely right in anticipating and apprehending that the greatest embarrassment may result to the industries of this country, which involves of course the workmen of this country, from any sudden deficit in the supply of coal in relation to its demand. If you are willing to stop there, if you admit, as I think must be admitted now, that there is no public health or safety involved in the question, and that there is, to put it at the lowest, grave risk of embarrassment to the industries of the country, surely no adequate case has been made out for the alteration that has been now preferred before the House. I have not overlooked the last point of detail which I will touch upon. I am aware the Committee have stated that they do not entirely accept the deficit of, I think, 25,000,000 tons, which the representatives of the coal industry gave in evidence before them. They do not accept that because of certain mitigating circumstances, and there are further mitigating circumstances in the proposal of the Home Secretary, but on the estimate of a witness to whom most properly the right hon. Gentleman referred in such high tones, Mr. Ratcliffe Ellis—of course a very great authority—the deficiency of output which would arise even on the Home Secretary's present scheme would be as much as 21,000,000 tons annually. It is said by the Committee that there will be certain mitigating circumstances which would prevent that full deficit. They say that labour will be more efficient. I do not think any evidence at all has been produced to show that the present colliers of the country do not work as hard as they possibly can. I venture to say that it is very much in conformity with human nature that they should work very hard in order that they may obtain a longer holiday and more off days by the vigour and energy of their work when they are actually at it. I am speaking somewhat as an expert in this matter, because when I myself am desirous of a holiday on Saturday, I very often work on Friday with an energy and zeal far greater than one works on any other occasion. It is still more natural in the case of a miner who has to travel a very considerable distance before he gets to his working place, and who feels: "Well, if I can put in a long day now I shall avoid travelling this long distance to my working place one or two days in the week." Therefore, I do not think any case has been made out in respect to efficiency of labour. As for absenteeism being diminished, which is a further mitigating circumstance referred to by the Committee, it has been shown by very authoritative persons that the larger the wages the colliers received the more likely they were to absent themselves from time to time, and that again is human nature. That is certainly in accordance with my experience, and I shall be surprised if it is not the experience of those engaged in other industries. With regard to the other mitigations suggested, it is perfectly manifest that there must be a large expense incurred, and the very moment there is increased expense there must be an increase in the price of coal, because all those improvements mean money. I will now sum up what I have said. I have given my reasons for doubting whether the proposal of the Government on which they rely will have the effect anticipated. The House is face to face with these facts. It is admitted that, as a result of this Bill, there will be a rise in the price of coal, a decrease in the output, and a corresponding serious embarrassment and dislocation of those industries on which the wealth of the country primarily depends. For incurring these great risks in the future affecting all classes, and no class more than the working class, there has not been established any case affecting the health and safety of the worker. So far from the cases put forward having compromised the Unionist Party with regard to the principle of this measure, no precedent of any sort or kind has been adduced for this Parliamentary interference on behalf of those who are amply competent to look after themselves, and by their vigour and intelligence are raised above the rest of the community in their capacity to do so. I will finish by reading to the House a resolution passed only to-day by a body of men which I do not think anybody in this House will say is not entitled to have a large say in the discussion of this question, I mean the conference of the delegates of the

Chambers of Commerce for the whole of the United Kingdom. They have resolved at a meeting specially convened on the eve of the Second Reading of the Miners Eight-Hours Bill that—

> "This Conference records its conviction that the measure in question, if passed into law, must disastrously affect the industries of the whole country."

I trust that the Government will most seriously consider that opinion. I hope also that they will remember that the process of putting up their economic consciences to auction in this country has not proved very profitable to them up to the present. If they are not moved by the resolution of the combined Chambers of Commerce of this country they may be moved a little by the result of recent elections, showing that their frank bidding by doles to meet the appetite of various classes in this country has been rejected, and rejected with some scorn.

*MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton) said that this was a subject of very much wider interest than some hon. Members appeared to think, and it was full of possibilities which might affect every industry throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. It was a question which might affect alike every consumer of coal and every large manufacturer who had to provide himself with a large supply of coal. When a Bill of such magnitude was brought in, surely they were entitled to ask that some very good reasons should be given before the House was asked to pass it. He had listened very carefully to all the speeches made in support of the Bill. He thought he was right in saying that the speech of the hon. Member for Hanley might be considered as the argument of precedence. The hon. Member said that the Bill had passed the House of Commons several times, but he confessed that he had never heard put forward a single reason why the present House of Commons should pass it on the present occasion. No doubt the hon. Member had many valuable arguments, but at any rate he neglected to give the House the opportunity of considering them. One argument had been used which required very grave consideration, and ought to make the House pause. The argument he alluded to was that in which the hon. Member said that if the Miners Federation did not get this Bill there might be a general strike. He anticipated that before the Miners' Federation could have come to a decision involving such a huge calamity, they must have some very good reasons for their action. He did not think the hon. Member had any right to use that as an argument to influence their votes, unless he was prepared to back it up by some very cogent arguments as to what had led the Miners' Federation of Great Britain to entertain that idea. The hon. Member for Gloucester, who, he believed, presided over the Committee which inquired into this matter of eight hours for miners, had made a speech which he evidently intended to be considered as one in support of the Bill. At any rate the hon. Member told them that he was going to vote for the Bill. Nevertheless, the *gravamen* of his speech was the huge perils that might arise under the Bill. The hon. Member told them that he had carefully considered the pros and cons of those perils, which, if they did actually come into being, would be a national calamity, and he admitted that in order to obviate them several Amendments of serious purport ought to be introduced into the Government measure before it was allowed to go through. When he passed on to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill, he was bound to say that, although he listened carefully to every word of that speech from beginning to end, he did not hear him put forward a single reason why this measure should be passed into law. Of course he adopted the apologetic tone of certain contingencies happening which he did not think would happen, and he gave the House a series of arguments as to why they should not happen. But were they to pass a measure of this kind simply because certain evils would not come to pass? Were they to carry on in that way, taking up the time of the House endeavouring to pass into law a particular measure, merely because there was no reason for apprehending that very great evils would come into being as a result of its passage into law? He thought they were entitled to claim that very cogent reasons should be given as to why such a Bill as this was wanted, and as to why the time of the House should be taken up discussing it. At the very commencement of his speech the right hon. Gentleman made what he thought was a sneering reference to a respectable body of men in this country, namely, the Coal Consumers Association. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Coal Consumers Association represented every body in general and nobody in particular.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): There are about ten of them.

*MR. RIDSDALE said that, personally, he thought the motto of every Government ought to be that they should represent everybody in general and nobody in particular, and he did not think that it lay in the mouth of any Minister to make a complaint of that kind. His complaint was that the Ministry were not acting up to that motto; as a matter of fact they were considering in this measure the interests of a particular section of the community and not the interests of the country as a whole. That was an argument which he commended to the right hon. Gentleman's serious consideration. At the commencement of his speech the Home Secretary entered into some figures with regard to strikes, and as far as he was able to apprehend his object, it was to show the effect of strikes upon the output and the price of coal. As far as he was able to follow the right hon. Gentleman, he gathered that the general drift of his argument was that strikes in the past had not driven up the price of coal.

*MR. GLADSTONE said that his object was to show that the effect of strikes upon the price of coal was not so great as had been claimed.

*MR. RIDSDALE said the point he was making was that the figures quoted by the Home Secretary were not worth very much. The right hon. Gentleman's argument really meant that they had only got to have strikes enough and they would have no coal produced, and yet the price of coal would not be altered. The value of those statistics was, therefore, practically *nil*. Then again the Home Secretary made a comparison in regard to factories. But surely factories could not possibly be put upon the same plane as coal mines. It was true that factories had been built, conducted, and supervised by man, but it must not be overlooked that coal mines were created by nature. The whole of the conditions as they affected coal mines were entirely beyond their power to alter. They might have a deep shaft or a shallow shaft; they might have to go a long way underground, or perhaps only a little way before they reached the actual place of working; they might have a wide or a narrow seam, it might be a hard or a soft coal, and the rocks encountered might be of a crumbling or of a hard and strong substance. The conditions, therefore, were so utterly different that they could not bring one broad general principle to bear upon this question in dealing with the whole lot, and that was the *gravamen* of his opposition to the Bill. They were trying to rope in dozens of industries, differing intensely in detail, to apply the same broad principle to the whole lot. It had been his privilege during the short time he had been in Parliament to listen to two debates on this subject, and in each of those debates some of the leading representatives of the miners themselves took a very strong line indeed against the enforced limitation of the hours of labour contained in the Bill. He remembered eloquent speeches made by his hon. friend the Member for Wansbeck, and the hon. Member for Gateshead. Had they altered their views? He thought they were entitled to have from them a statement of their reasons if they had done so. After that they might be able to understand them. At any rate, at present he was entitled to weigh against the speech of the hon. Member for Hanley the past speeches of the hon. Members for Gateshead and Wansbeck. The hon. Member for Gloucester, who seemed to be very well up in the technique of the business, knew all about the varying industries, as he ought to, having been a member of the Committee to which reference had been made. He made a reference to the Forest of

Dean and said that the miners there were still opposed to the Bill He did not know whether that was true or not. He would have liked the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean to give the House his opinion on that. He hoped the right hon. Baronet would state whether the miners in the division he represented were favourable to it or not. But this was a suggestion to enforce a limitation of hours, not on particular mines, but on all mines. Surely that was a gross interference with the liberty of the adult subject. Was this House to degenerate into a tyranny, and was it going to enforce upon adult citizens what they might or might not do, without giving any reasons, granting that it might be necessary? All laws were restrictive, and sometimes to a certain extent tyrannical, but they wished to have some reasons, and what he said was that no reasons had been given for this proposal at all. He could understand it if miners were ill paid, if they were stunted men, if their death rate was heavy, even if they were unable to send representatives to Parliament, and even if the representatives they sent to Parliament were dummies, who could not make speeches or express their views to the nation; but what they were confronted with was that some of the ablest men in the House were members of the Miners' Union. They could voice with the greatest force, clearness, and eloquence, the views they held, and he only wished that he could imitate them. But to think that they, leading one of the strongest Unions in the country, could not come to terms with the owners if this were really a desirable proposal, was a thing which he thought all their eloquence would really be unable to bring the House to believe. He noticed that the right hon. Gentleman did not quite accept the mortality figures. He took out a certain series of years and stated that in this series of years the death rate among miners was heavier than the death rate in other trades. He seemed really to have gone over to the tariff reformers for his method of argument. He had not taken a general broad outline as to what the general result was, but he had picked here, there, and everywhere, and ascertained that in regard to certain ages the death rate was greater in one case than in another. Really they were entitled to take the verdict of the Committee on that point. The verdict of the Committee was that they had no reason to say that the mortality among miners was greater than in analogous trades. The right hon. Gentleman mentioned the case of Germany. He said that in mines where the temperature was over 82° Germany had made a restrictive law whereby labour was limited to six hours. If that was the substance of the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman he would give him his vote. He could see a reason in that. It was not reasonable to suppose that human beings could labour for an indefinite period in such a temperature. He did not know whether five, six, or eight hours was the proper time, yet he supposed that if the experts had advised that six hours was enough the German Government had adopted that limit. If the Government chose to bring in a small Bill and say that labour in particular mines in England should not be longer than six hours he would give it his support, but they were bringing in a sweeping measure including all the mines in Great Britain whether hot mines, or cold mines, deep mines, or shallow mines, and they were treating them all on the same basis. And why coal mines rather than tin mines or lead mines? But of all the things which the right hon. Gentleman did in his speech, the one thing which gave him most surprise—he could hardly believe his own ears when he heard him say it—was when he took the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, whose absence from the House they all deplored, as his leader and gave great credence to him as a prophet. He thought if there was one thing the Government never would do, it would be to acclaim the virtues of the right hon. Member for West Brmingham as a prophet. They admired the right hon. Gentleman's abilities in many walks of life, and they admired greatly his political career, but he did not think many of them who sat on those benches would care to follow the Government in acclaiming the probable accuracy of any prophecy with regard to financial matters which the right hon. Gentleman might have made. It was not the first time this had happened, and he began to wonder whether the Government intended to offer the right hon. Gentleman a seat in the Cabinet. The Prime Minister had quoted the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, as his authority on old-age pensions. He had proclaimed himself his follower in that respect. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had adopted a working model of protection which the right hon. Gentleman initiated, and now the climax of it was that they had Home Secretary upholding his reputation as a prophet. He did not know how much further in that direction the Government meant to go. He wished to impress very firmly upon the House as a whole the very great importance of this measure for which they were asked to-night to vote. It was not a question of one trade being injured as the result of passing the measure if any of its perils chanced to develop. Coal was the source of the energy required in all trades throughout the length and breadth of the land. There was no industry in Great Britain to which a rise in the price of coal did not mean a loss of profit, and if it meant a loss of profit, it meant a loss of wages, and a loss of the money to be provided for wages, while it must eventually mean that more men would be thrown out of employment. Touching on that point he would like to refer to the development going on on the continent in regard to our great manufacturing rivals. The huge industrial development of last century in this country was mainly due to the presence of coal and iron within our borders. We had for a time a monopoly of coal, but of late years there had been growing up a new development in other countries in the fortunate possession of great rivers and waterfalls. They had been developing the water power of their countries so that all down the different valleys of Italy and Switzerland, practically all over the United States of America, and in many places in Canada, the huge forces of falling water were being harnessed and converted into electricity. In these little places industries were springing up which would be, if indeed they were not at present, great rivals of our manufacturing industries. So far it seemed to be proved that water power was cheaper than power developed through the means of heat and coal, and no act should be done in this House which would in any way tend to jeopardise our manufactures in the competition which they would have to meet through those water-fed powers in other places. They must recollect that this country was practically devoid of water powers. As a source of energy coal was our all. He had referred to the generality of the users of coal, and how in all parts of the country a rise in the price of coal might have the greatest effect. He spoke for a constituency which had no miners in it, but there was not a constituent of his who did not use this commodity and who would not be affected by a rise in the price. The corporation itself was a large user of electricity; it lighted its own streets, and ran its own tramways. Any rise that might take place in the price of coal must be thrown on the rates. The case of his own constituency must also be the case of many others throughout the length and breadth of the land, and he trusted that before the House passed a measure of this kind it would seek for reasons.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) thought the remarkable feature of the debate up to the present was that they had had only one speech in favour of the Bill before the House. They had had two speeches indeed from hon. Members who concluded with the announcement that they were going to vote for the measure. The Home Secretary at the beginning of his remarks said that this was a subject upon which the House of Commons had been practically unanimous during this Parliament. They were all aware of the two occasions when the subject was debated in 1906 and 1907. The debates then were conducted on particular lines. On the first occasion the right hon. Gentleman announced, against the desire of the miners' representatives, that he intended to institute an inquiry into those particulars upon which at that time information was lacking. That was a decision for which he certainly gave him thanks. That put the whole question in an entirely new light. They could not be told now that this was a subject which had been discussed for twenty years. The hon. Member for Gloucester had said that he had not changed his mind, and that he voted for the Eight Hours Bill in previous years; but he had described it that evening as an economic disaster. He presumed, therefore, that the hon. Member had changed his mind to that extent, and that he did not go so far as he did in previous years. If anybody wished to know what the opinion of the Home Secretary was formerly he would ask them to read his speech last year when he had, of course, the advantage of a great deal of the information they had now in the Blue-book which they did not possess at that time. His speech then most clearly proved that the Bill put forward by the Miners' Federation could not be accepted without the risk of considerable disaster to the country at large. Therefore, they had on the first occasion in 1906 the promise of a Committee of inquiry, and that, of course, diverted the attention of the House from actual opposition to the Second Reading of the Bill; while last year they had the announcement by the Government that they were going to take up the subject and that they intended to bring in a Bill this session. They knew now from the Home Secretary that the Bill of the Miners' Federation was referred to the Committee, and so far as the House was concerned that Bill was dead and gone and could not be revived, and they had therefore started from an entirely new position in which they had the great advantage of the careful Report to which so much reference had been made that evening. It was, therefore, on those lines that they expected an answer from those who had so long pressed this question upon the House. They had not had that answer up to the present time. They had had a speech from the hon. Member for Hanley, but he did not think it was one which would make them change their policy in regard to the subject of adult labour in connection with mining, which affected every part of the country, though in different degrees. Before the debate concluded they should receive much more information than they had at present, from those who had interested themselves in putting forward this measure. He had had something to do for a number of years with the Mining Association, and he had no doubt it might be supposed that the concession put forward by the Home Secretary in regard to winding, was a very considerable advance towards the position taken up by them. But it must be remembered that their case was very clearly put before the right hon. Gentleman by the deputation which waited upon him early in the year. They then stated that they were just as much opposed as ever to the principle of the Bill, but that if they were forced by circumstances and public opinion to accept a Bill of this character, they considered it most essential that both windings should be excluded from the period of eight hours. He was glad to think that so far as the right hon. Gentleman's argument that night as to the danger of rapid winding was concerned, he himself was convinced that the Mining Association was perfectly right on this matter. The right hon. Gentleman's Amendment, however, was of no practical value, because of the time-limit—a thing of which the Government were just now enamoured. At the end of this very limited time all the dangers in connection with both windings would recur, but on that occasion the House and the country would have no opportunity of reviewing the subject, because the change would come automatically into operation. If the right hon. Gentleman had come forward and said that he would not let his Amendment apply permanently until Parliament made a new arrangement, then he might have met the Mining Association so far as this matter was concerned. But by the employment of the time limit he evaded the whole question, and endeavoured to get the Bill through by a mere subterfuge, and without reference to the views of those who had most carefully considered the matter. The right hon. Gentleman did not allude to other matters of great importance, which were debated when the Bill was last before the House. Perhaps he might say that these were Committee points; but he might have dealt with the question which was still unsettled as to the definition of the men who were excluded from the operation of the Bill. The Committee gave a very large rendering to the class of men who they considered should be excluded from the operation of the eight-hours principle, with or without the windings; but he did not think the right hon. Gentleman had gone nearly as far as had been acknowledged to be necessary by those who had had experience in the working of mines, and had a right to be considered in the matter. Another subject to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded last year, but not on this occasion, was the necessity of being extremely careful in deciding who was to be responsible for any infringement of the Act when passed. That was a matter that required very careful consideration. The Government had introduced into the

Bill by Clause 6 a principle which he did not remember ever to have seen in any other Bill. Clause 6 said:—

> "If any person contravenes or fails to comply with or permits any person to contravene or fail to comply with any provision of this Act for which a special penalty is not provided, he shall be guilty of an offence against this Act, and in the event of such contravention or non-compliance by any person whomsoever, the owner, agent, and manager of the mine shall be guilty of an offence under this Act."

In other words, every manager, agent, or owner of a mine, was assumed to be guilty of an infringement of the Act until he was proved to be innocent. That was a reversal of everything connected with law. Everybody knew that the actual effect in connection with the carrying out of the Act would depend far more on the men than on the manager, or the agent, or the owner. With reference to the Committee's Report there had been an assumption that it contained an exaggerated idea as to the extent of the reduction of output. The Committee mentioned many means by which they considered the reduction of output caused by reduction of time might be made up, and one on which they laid most stress was the question of the considerable leakage which now existed in the mines owing to the men not working the time that they might work when the pits were open. The Committee alluded to the fact that there was something like 13 per cent. of time which might be made up more or less in this manner. In reference to that question, when they discussed the economic effect of the eight-hours' limit, the Committee said that much depended upon whether the miners themselves were willing to carry out the new system on the condition that they should work on other days without asking for an equivalent wage. That was the essence of the question. If they were going to have an alteration of the wage equivalent to the time they worked it might cause a great increase in the price, as was much feared by the hon. Member for Windsor. There would be no objection to the limit of eight hours if they received less wages or if they made any exertion to occupy the spare time. They had had a very interesting statement by the hon. Member for Ince as to the attitude of the miners in regard to this question. The hon. Member took some exception to the remarks of the hon. Member for Windsor that 6d. per ton would be the probable increase of the price of coal. The hon. Member for Windsor spoke of it as if it applied to the whole country, whereas the hon. Member for Ince only alluded to the particular mine in the Wigan district in which he was interested and the circumstances of which he knew. It was interesting to find that the very attitude taken up by the hon. Member for Ince was considered by the Committee. The Committee, in alluding to the district of Lancashire, said in their Report:—

> "If the men were not so willing, and were to demand a revision of the basis of their wages, it would appear probable, considering the extensive character of the miners' organisations, that the movement for higher wages would be general throughout the coalfields in the United Kingdom."

Therefore the remarks of the hon. Member for Windsor regarding the spread of the demand for an increase of wages to the whole United Kingdom were justified by the Report. The Committee also suggested that the success of the movement would depend chiefly on the condition of the trade at the time. When they were told, as they had been by the hon. Member for the Ince division, that the miners were unanimous in favour of the Bill, it was natural that that should be the case, when the miners were informed by those who led them that under any circumstances when the Bill came into operation they would receive the same wages for the reduced time of working as at present. Therefore, when the opinion of the miners was quoted they ought to remember on what lines it had been given, and what was their expectation on the subject. In regard to the other ways of making up time from spare days in order that the actual production should not be decreased, he did not think that the whole of the "stop" days would be altered. These had been arrived at by mutual understanding, and were made coincident with local fete days, or public holidays, and no Member acquainted with the habits of miners would say that that system was likely to be altered. The same argument applied to the half "stop" days and to the short days on Saturdays. He believed it was very improbable that the short day on Saturday would ever cease to exist. It was not desirable, in his opinion, that the House should legislate when employers and employed were agreed that it was to the advantage of their body as a whole that certain days should be long or short—that the Legislature should step in and make long days shorter and short days longer. It was better that the local arrangement made between employers and employed for the advantage, comfort, and convenience of those engaged in the local industry should be continued to fit the particular trade of particular districts. Both from what they learnt from abroad, and from what happened in this country, they felt at once that the natural way to deal with this matter was to allow the districts themselves to work out their own salvation. That was very much easier done by local regulations than by a hard and fast Act applicable to the whole country. The right hon. Gentleman himself had acknowledged that the Act would weigh heavily on Northumberland and Durham, while it would benefit Lancashire and South Wales. All hard and fast lines would do injustice when the conditions of mining were so various, and that was the reason why he had put down an Amendment on the Paper that it was desirable that they should adhere to regulations to meet all the varying needs of the country rather than adopt hard and fast regulations for the whole country. An hon. Member had stated that the miners in the Forest of Dean would be satisfied with the Bill as foreshadowed by the Home Secretary. He did not think that the hon. Member was quite correct. What the miners of the Forest of Dean said was that they had changed their mind from eight hours from face to face to eight hours from bank to bank, which was a very different thing from eight hours from winding to winding. But that was only a temporary expedient, and was to go at the end of five years; therefore it did not meet the views of the miners of the Forest of Dean. They had seen nothing in the Bill to meet the extremely difficult conditions referred to in the Report, or to meet the peculiar conditions of Northumberland and Durham. There was no more interesting chapter in the Report of the Committee than that which dealt with the export trade. The Committee showed which part of our export trade was in danger, and which was not. But every argument against imposing any additional cost which would impede the import trade could be used with greater effect in support of the export duty on coal, which had been taken off by the Government. Everybody knew that that export duty did not apply to cheap coal or coal taken as ballast, and by the withdrawal of that tax he did not think any person was any the better off. Still, if the miners believed that a shilling export duty would be so fatal to their trade—a duty which applied to the higher qualities of coal—he failed to see how they could hold a contrary opinion in view of the increased price which must inevitably come from the reduction of hours—an increase which at the lowest calculation would amount to 1s. per ton, and would apply to all classes of coal—soft, hard, and small. As to the question of the health and safety of the miners, he thought that the right hon. Member for St. George's had really placed most of the facts before the House. They had a right to say that when they were asked to pass a measure which would affect the vital interests and safety of the miners, they should have overwhelming evidence in favour of it. At the present moment he thought that the evidence was against the contention of the Home Secretary. The Report of the Committee was very strong on two points. They said that they were satisfied that the health of the miners was better than that of those engaged in other occupations; and so far as accidents were concerned, although the trade was dangerous, they could not trace any connection between the number of accidents and the number of hours worked. They had a Royal Commission now sitting going into the question of the safety of miners and the prevention of accidents, and he thought they ought to wait for their Report to see whether it was necessary to take these measures for the prevention of accidents, or even to limit the hours of miners. So far as the existing evidence went it was against the present measure. He was exceedingly reluctant to oppose anything which had for its object the bettering of the condition of those who worked in mines, for he had had for many years a good deal to do with them. He thought there was no finer class in this country than the colliers, but he was bound to oppose them in the attitude which their leaders had taken in this matter. He did not believe that the men themselves really appreciated what the results of the Bill presented in so academic a way would be. Therefore, he thought they were justified in asking the Government to reconsider their position. They had new facts before them of a very valuable character which went against this Bill, or any other Bill which had been previously before the House. These new facts suggested at the last moment that great alterations should be made in the Bill, and he thought there was nothing to justify the House in proceeding with a measure which might involve very great disaster to the community and which it was doubtful would be of any advantage to the health and safety of those concerned.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM said that in listening to the arguments and to the remarks which had fallen from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite who opposed the Bill, one might be led to believe that mines were the healthiest shops in the world, and that there was in them no danger to life or limb, or anything else. If that was truly the belief of those hon. and right hon. Gentlemen, he would expect to see them go to the mines as a kind of winter garden for their pleasure, since the mines were so helpful to human life! One could not but wonder at the exaggerations which were indulged in when dealing with this measure for the reduction of hours of labour in mines. From the commencement of the debate not a a single Member on the other side had said a word on the Bill actually before the House. Like the deputation which waited on the Home Secretary, they had based their argument upon the old measure of limiting the hours from bank to bank. Really, some of the statements which had been put forward as to the probable effect of the reduction of hours were, to those who knew anything about mine working—he did not want to use any harsh or offensive phrase—ridiculous and nonsensical and he did not think that any sensible man could be honest in putting them forward. It had been said, for instance, in very high quarters, that the Bill would enhance the cost of production by 1s. 6d. per ton. The reduction of hours of winding, or of working the coal, proposed by the Bill for at least four-fifths of the coal producers of the country was half an hour, or about one-sixteenth of the whole time employed in producing coal. If this reduction of one-sixteenth meant increasing the cost by 1s. 6d. per ton, then the cost of production for eight hours must be 24s. per ton now. That was so impossible a proposition to practical men, that they could hardly listen to it with patience. It was time that hon. Gentlemen opposite, who opposed a Bill proposing to benefit such a large number of the most essential workers in the country, considered whether there was anything at all in the objections which they raised. South Wales with a portion of Lancashire were the parts of the country which would be most seriously affected by the Bill. And why? The reason was—and this was the answer to those who asked why they came to Parliament for this measure to have the hours of labour settled—that the South Wales owners had for thirty-five years demanded a preferential treatment and been working about an hour per day longer than any other part of the United Kingdom, with the exception of a small portion of Lancashire. Even if they took the reduction of one-ninth, what would it cost to bring up a ton? No less than 13s. 6d. a ton. Wages to-day were good; they were glad of it; they owned it. Wages were 60 per cent. above the standard. Would the employers be able to pay 60 per cent. over the 1s. 6d. per ton higher than the 13s. 6d.? What was the argument? With the wages at 60 per cent. above the standard the price of coal at the ports of South Wales, free on board, was simply 15s. a ton. Therefore, the argument that the reduction of the hours of working as proposed by this Bill, with all due deference, was not worth listening to for a moment. They were told to consider the case of the consumer. They, as miners, were glad that somebody was beginning to take the part of the consumer, and that the consumer was not to be left to the mercy of the coalowners and the middleman as they had been for years. But what were the facts? Who was getting the money? Take the price of coal in South Wales for the last eighteen months (not two years). They had been told that the wages paid at present had made the price of 15s. a ton, free on board, at the ports of Newport, Cardiff, Swansea, and Llanelly, and so forth, but the consumers at each of those ports had been paying 25s. a ton. Who got it? It was not the collier. All that 10s. which the consumers had to pay went to the employers, and it would not have to be considered in relation to the wages of the colliers, who did not receive a farthing of it. Therefore, the colliers were glad that something was being said on behalf of the consumers. The consumers must not blame the poor colliers, who did not receive any part of the increased cost to the consumer. The public must understand that all the miners were seeking was that they should be relieved of a little of the time that they were forced to spend underground. It was suggested that the miner had more than he wanted, in fact more than was really necessary, if they listened to the arguments that were advanced. It was said that the miners wanted their wages advanced for the same amount of work. That was not the case in South Wales. What the South Wales men wanted was that the coal they produced should be cleared away in time, and they would give the same amount of coal as they had done hitherto. That was not an empty assumption. Much was said about the evidence in the Report, but let them take two of the most eminent engineers who had been before the Commission. Every man would admit that there was no abler engineer than one of these gentlemen, who said that he had been studying this question for years, and that the men could easily produce 10 per cent. more coal if the employers would clear away for them. He said again that they were not seeking to get this Bill passed for the sake of advancing wages. They wanted more time, more leisure; they wanted to enjoy themselves in the open air, in the light of the sun. It was not a question of wages. They were not grumbling at the wages; they were thankful that they were as good as they were, though if they were paid on the sliding scale, as one hon. Member said, they would be receiving much more than they were getting now. But beyond the 15s., in South Wales wages had not been affected at all. Another engineer, Mr. Bramwell, gave the figures for two consecutive fortnights, and he calculated that in the short days, in proportion, the men raised ten per cent. more coal than they did in the long days. They knew that was true. More than that, their check weighers knew that equally well with the employers; and let it be said here that when once the employers and workmen agreed that a thing should be done, then it was to their credit that the thing was done. Whether it were a picnic, a meeting, or possibly a religious meeting, or something of that kind, when once the men had agreed about it, then it was done. And, in this instance, he had not the slightest doubt that were the employers and the workmen to agree—by this Bill they would be forced to agree—they would find that the coming to an agreement was very easy of accomplishment. He did not want to labour this question. They had another individual, a manager, who gave evidence before the Commission with regard to the hours. Perhaps he would have been more guarded if he had reflected on the possibility of the use which might be made of his testimony. What did he say as to the hours worked by the men and the boys? He said that they were working continually, and that as a rule they left their working places about an hour before winding time, endangering their own lives. Why should this continue? There was half an hour every shift, and if they reduced that half-hour these men would not produce a single pound of coal less than they were producing now, and instead of increasing the danger they had the admission of the manager himself that there would be less danger to the men, and that they would not hamper things at the bottom of the shaft, and so forth. They were asked why they came to Parliament. Was there not a reason why? It was sad in a sense that they should come here to find fault with some of the best employers in South Wales, but for thirty-five years they have been breaking the law—breaking the Mines Act—in the case of the boys who could not in any way defend themselves. Why were they there? Because they could not help themselves and were compelled to be there. It was said that they had made no effort before. There stood one before them who had three times made appeal to the colliery owners, and though his appeal had in every other respect been conceded, yet the moment they came to the question of the hours, they were told to stand aside, because that was no occasion for dealing with the subject. If the Conciliation Board or the Sliding Scale Committee was not the place to deal with the hours of labour where was the place, unless they came to that House? And they were there now to ask that House to do for them what they had failed to do for themselves. It was necessary that something should be done to compel some of their own men to leave work. It was not always the fault of the employers. A man might desire to increase his wage a little, and he continued to work in a bad place instead of fighting for his rights, and oftentimes he was in great danger. A man who had been at work for the proper time should be able to walk from his work with all his faculties on the alert. A collier had three guardian angels for the protection of his life—the power of seeing, the power of hearing, and the power of feeling. When he descended in the morning, he had to rig his lamp up for the day. It was his duty to protect his life by examining the working places before he earned a penny. When he failed to detect danger with the aid of the lamp, knowing the danger which lurked around, he used his sense of hearing. Sometimes both the sense of sight and of hearing fail him, and he then tried to ascertain where the danger lurked by the sense of feeling, and then he tested with his drill to see where the danger existed. But for these three guardian angels, many a man would have lost his life when he went down the pit or when he was walking home from his working place. What they asked was that the House should interfere on behalf of the miners and on behalf of the boys who had been so roughly dealt with for so many long years. They asked the House to interfere with those men who in order to earn a little more remained at work, and who, when they left, had sometimes to be carried out because they had not left when they were able to walk. Colliers knew that that was true. They were asked whether they were unanimous. To-day he was glad to say that the representatives of Durham had received a telegram from their officials requesting them to support the Bill. They were sending four representatives up to London to lobby the Members in support of the Bill. They had had the miners of the Forest of Dean against the Bill, it was true. The men of the Forest of Dean went against the bank to bank Bill, but they had no reason to go against this Bill. Notwithstanding that their collieries were in close proximity to those of South Wales, and notwithstanding that they had for more than twenty years refused to join the Miners' Federation, yet to-day he did not know any body of men who would be more glad to come into the ranks of the Miners' Federation, because this had been the one question which had separated them before. He thanked the House for having listened to him, and he hoped that it would pass the Bill.

Mr. GIBBS (Bristol, W.) said his hon. friend the Member for Windsor had stated that all Chambers of Commerce were opposed to the Bill. He had received a telegram from the Bristol Chamber of Commerce in which they said that the Miners Eight Hours Bill if passed into law would seriously limit production and increase the price of coal. They protested against the Bill because it would cause great injury to the people of this country, and they had given instructions that a copy of the resolution should be sent to the Home Secretary and the local Members of Parliament. He had no doubt that this telegram had been sent to his colleagues in the representation of

Bristol. At all events there could be no doubt that the Chambers of Commerce in this country had watched the Bill very anxiously and closely. He believed that the effect of the Bill was not generally known by the people of the country, and that many individuals would not really find out what its effect was until they found their coal bill for home consumption going up, while the great industries of the country were also being affected. But of course the operation of the Bill would indirectly affect also the prices of many articles, and in cases where there was great competition with foreigners it would ultimately destroy industries. The Home Secretary had said that the cry of "wolf" and that our industries would be destroyed had been raised before. That might be so. But that did not seem to him any reason for saying that the wolf was not at our door now. Let him take the case of the home consumer. It seemed to him that the effect of the Bill would be far greater where coal was bought in small quantities at a time—in cases where a cwt. was bought rather than in cases where several tons were bought. The great majority of the people were in the habit of buying less than a ton of coal at a time. It had been suggested that the Bill would put up the price of coal 2s. a ton, so that a man who bought two cwt. of coal a week, and many people did not burn more than that, would pay 1s. 5d. a cwt. or 2s. 10d. a week, or on the year, if he bought five tons four cwt. it would be an increase of two pence a week. Though the amount appeared small, yet hon. Members would agree that it was a very serious matter for many householders in this country. All our industries were mostly dependent upon coal, and if an eight hours limit was put upon the coal mines of this country in regard to the working of the coal, it would react undoubtedly upon the industries generally of this country. He would take shipping for example. If this Eight Hours Bill were passed a very much larger sum would have to be paid for coal, and that would result, in the case of a great many smaller vessels—finding their profits gone—having to lay up, and if they did lay up seamen would be thrown out of employment, and they would find it extremely difficult to get into work again. He believed that the shipping industry would be most vitally affected, and if it were affected, he believed that it would also seriously diminish the carrying of goods and the volume of trade in manufactured goods. This question of shipping was a most important one for consideration. We were living in an island, and our shipping industry was the most important of all our industries, and yet the Government proposed to pass a measure by which the greater part of that industry would be very much affected, and a portion of it destroyed altogether. It was estimated by the Departmental Committee that, in the case of a small vessel, the cost of the coal was 42 per cent. of the whole working cost. In the case of tramps the cost of coal was from 26 to 30 per cent. If the price of coal went up he believed that the burden on the shipping industry would be very hard to bear. There was no cry of "wolf," there. If the shipping industry had an extra burden of cost put upon it he believed it would be very difficult to ward off the blow, and it would have a greater burden cast upon it than it had experienced for many years past. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would take this question very seriously to heart when the Bill got into Committee. It had been pointed out by other speakers that the Bill would affect a great many other industries. It would not only affect industries, but it would affect the great majority of the people of this country, and that was to be done for a single portion of the community, many of whom were not in favour of this limitation on the hours of labour.

*MR. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) said he rose to support the Second Reading of the Bill, while reserving to himself, in Committee, the right to propose Amendments to provisions of which he did not altogether approve. He rejoiced that they had got this Bill before Parliament, so that they could have the arguments stated and rebutted on the floor of the House, as so much misrepresentation had taken place outside. He noticed that special emphasis had been laid on the fact that resolutions had been passed that day by the national gathering of Chambers of Commerce opposing this Bill. Might he state to the House that if the Chambers of Commerce were let alone, and if they had not been dragooned by the coalowners and the Consumers League alike, there would have been no resolutions passed by many Chambers of Commerce who were now reckoned as opponents of the Bill? For some weeks there were leading articles in *The Iron and Coal Trade Review* and in *The Colliery Guardian* impeaching the Chamber of Commerce of Sunderland, because they would not lend themselves to opposing this Bill and had passed a resolution to that effect. Those two periodicals, which were the official organs of the colliery owners, complained of the want of interest on the part of a body like the Sunderland Chamber of Commerce. In one article the writer went on in the most Jeremiah-like strain to say that the passing of the Bill would bring disaster to industries of this country. Now the right hon. Gentleman the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, came down to the House and declared with all solemnity that, in face of the resolution passed by the national gathering of the Chambers of Commerce of Britain, the Government would surely not go on with the Bill. The marvel to him was not that Chambers of Commerce had passed resolutions against the Bill, but that any authorities could be found in Britain that could pass a resolution in favour it in face of the extraordinary statements which had been made as to what was going to happen. In his division they had the greatest dead-weight carrying docks in the world. If this Bill would reduce the output, it would inflict as great a disaster upon the docks of Barry as upon any industry in any part of the United Kingdom. Among the circulars and appeals sent out to oppose this Bill, there was an appeal sent to the Barry local administrative authority. They were a body representing a municipality that stood to gain very much and to lose very much indeed if this Bill was going to bring about such disaster as the opponents of the measure had been declaring. But the Barry municipal authorities, after reasoning the matter out, came to the conclusion not to oppose the Bill as appealed to by the Mining Association of the United Kingdom or by the Coal Consumers' League, but to support the Bill, and it was his great pleasure to tell the House that he had received this resolution—

> "That this Council heartily endorses the Coal Mines Eight Hours Bill, and that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Member for the division."

There they had an expression of opinion in favour of the Bill, not because either he or anyone else had appealed to the municipality there to support the Bill, but simply because they felt it their duty to support a Bill which was intended to do so much for the class of people that rendered so much service to the State and to the nation. Might he for a moment or two deal with the question of reduced output? It was upon that basis that all the calculations were made, and if there was no reduction of output all the calculations would be wrong. Right hon. and hon. Members had been talking as if the colliers were paid by the day—as if all they had to do was to go to the pit and draw their pay. Might he tell the House that they could have no guarantee stronger than the fact that the men who cut the coal were only paid by results or by the ton? The colliers got no pay whatsoever other than in proportion to the quantity of coal that they cut. The colliers themselves could not afford a reduction in output. They could not afford a reduction in wages, and, therefore, they could not afford a reduction in output. In many collieries not only did the men cut the coal by the ton as colliers, but the haulers who handled the coal and took it to the bottom also hauled the coal by the ton; they were paid by results, and it was only in proportion to the amount of coal that was sent to bank that they could receive their pay. But when he said further that in a number of collieries the timber men and repairers were paid by results it would be appreciated, he hoped, that the greatest guarantee that the nation could possibly have against any reduction in output lay in the fact that the colliers themselves were the most vitally interested of any section in the nation in not reducing the output but rather maintaining it at the present standard. His hon. friend had made a point that colliers were paid by price. What was the system? At every colliery there was a price list made to meet the particular seams worked at that colliery. There was a conciliation board that dealt with the general regulation of the wages. In that conciliation board agreement there was a 30 per cent. as a minimum and a 60 per cent. as a maximum, and it made no difference to them if the selling price of coal went to £2 a ton. All that they could vary between the minimum and maximum points was 30 per cent., and they were on the maximum at present, and had been for a long time. Therefore, when his hon. friend put the question that the workmen were paid by the price, the only variation that an increase in the selling price of coal could make to their wages, even if accepted as the sole factor, would be the difference between 30 per cent. and 60 per cent., the minimum and the maximum point. He trusted his hon. friend, therefore, would realise that when he allowed himself to be led to the conclusion that the workmen stood to gain so much by an increase in price, that at the colliery workmen were paid by a price list which did not vary in the tonnage rate, the rate for timber or the rate for repairing—and the only variation that could take place was in the percentage between 30 per cent. the minimum, and 60 per cent. the maximum.

An HON. MEMBER: Could the maximum be raised?

*Mr. BRACE said that they would be very delighted to raise the maximum. It was what they had been trying to do for a long time, but up to the present they had found it impossible. Doubtless the maximum could be raised, but they invariably found that the coal owners when they met them about seeking an advance in wages could strike the same note as speakers had been striking in that debate, that if they pressed for any advance in wages the industry was going to be ruined and that there was an end of the chapter. What was it the colliers got for cutting coal? The average cutting price that the man got who worked at the coal face was 1s. 6d. per ton on the standard plus 60 per cent. That was less than 2s. 5d. per ton for cutting large coal alone and nothing for the small coal. The House would realise that with a cutting price of 2s. 4¾d., men with family responsibilities could not afford to have any reduction in the output, and in face of the fact that the men themselves were paid only by results the House need have no fear in passing a measure, the principle of which was embodied in the Bill, under the impression or with the fear that there would be any reduction in the output.

Mr. MARKHAM (Nottingham, Mansfield): Do we understand that if the Bill passes into law the miners will not at once ask for increased prices? I know they will.

*Mr. BRACE said he did not say that that was an unfair question, and he answered the House quite frankly as a man who always told the truth on matters of this kind and upon all matters. He could, were he a clever diplomatist, hedge the question, but he would much rather frankly tell the House what they had done or rather had not done. Not in any conference or in any congress or in any committee or in private conversation had his colleagues and himself discussed the question of advancing the wages consequent upon the passing of the Bill. They had never thought it necessary, first, because they did not think there would be any reduction in output, and therefore there would be no reduction in work or wages and no special necessity by the passing of this Bill for any increase; and, secondly, because they knew that if they asked the employers they would have to bring some pressure to bear upon them to get it from them. What astonished him was the cold-blooded inhumanity of this opposition. He had heard nothing but dividends and prices and the result to industries—hardly a word about the men who risked their lives in winning for the nation a great source of its wealth. When they said that the consumers of this country had a privilege he said: "Yes, but the consumers have a responsibility as well," and it was because they thought the nation ought to give to the people who risked so much and laboured so heavily for the national weal that they asked the House with confidence to pass this Eight Hours Bill. Of course the Coal Consumers League were nominally the opponents in the country, but the real opponents after all, he was afraid, were the colliery owners. He would like to deal with them for a moment or two. Would the House permit him to point out that there was not that close relationship between output and price that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen seemed to suppose. The House would be surprised, he believed, after what had occurred, to be told that in the year 1906 there was an increase in the output of the coal of the nation by 15,000,000 tons over 1905. In 1907 there was an increase of nearly 17,000,000 tons over 1906, and the increase was not in those coalfields that dealt with the export trade. A large proportion of the increase was in the Midland area, which dealt largely in the supply of British industries. He had the table before him. He simply quoted two. For the Midlands there was an increase in 1907 over 1906 of 3,947,465 tons. In York and Lincoln, a portion of which would be export and a portion of home consumption, the increase was 2,624,036 tons. At any rate the coalfields that had the largest increase last year were the coalfields supplying home industries. And yet the House would remember that at that time, in a record year of production, the general public were made to pay the highest prices for their fuel. This was not a romance, but a concrete fact, and he gave it as an answer to those people who would have the House and the country believe that there was such a close relationship between output and price that if there was the smallest reduction in the output by the introduction of this Bill, it would send prices up to famine point, and bring about disaster and ruin in the industries of the country. It was not decent for colliery owners to oppose this Bill. There had been times in their experience when they could with some amount of decency come to Parliament and oppose the Bill. But to come in the year 1908 and oppose granting a reduction in hours to the workmen in face of the enormous profits made last year—profits that ought to satisfy the most avaricious shareholder—he stood appalled. There was no thought at all about the workmen's side of the question. Might he take a colliery balance-sheet just for a moment or two? Here was the Powell Duffryn—

> "We would like to draw your attention to the £1 fully paid ordinary in this company. The property is probably one of the finest in the world"—

The House would not forget that this was one of the companies which were appealing to the House not to pass the Bill or the industry would be ruined—

> "And we believe at least £4,000,000 has been spent upon this property. The total subscribed capital is only £978,975, whilst the output last year was 3,169,753 tons. The company are now developing new pits, which will bring the output up to about 5,000,000 tons per annum. Last year the balance to credit and loss was no less than £451,000. The company could, therefore, have paid a 50 per cent. dividend if they wished. The distribution for the year on the ordinary shares was 20 per cent., and £200,000 was added to reserve, and £115,000 carried forward. The company is exceptionally well managed, and we think the shares are an excellent investment at present price, which is 35s. 6d."

The property of this company was supposed to be one of the finest in the world and worth £4,000,000 sterling. Its total subscribed capital was £978,975, and last year its output was 3,000,000 and odd tons. The company were now developing new pits out of revenue which would bring the output up to 5,000,000 tons per annum. Last year the profit was £451,000 upon a capital outlay of £978,975. The company could, therefore, have paid nearly 50 per cent. dividend if they had wished. The distribution for the year was at the rate of 15 per cent. on the ordinary shares, and £200,000 was added to the reserve, while £115,000 was carried forward. If anyone wanted a £1 share in this Company, he would have to pay 35s. 6d. for it. Let him take another concern. The figures were very interesting. He referred to the firm of Partridge Jones and Company. He took these two collieries because they were in Wales. If necessary he would take a few from somewhere else, because he had them all there. The total amount invested in this concern was a little more than £300,000. Of the total amount earned, £176,957, little more than half (£90,000) was absorbed by the distribution of 30 per cent. dividend, and of the balance £70,000 was placed towards the sinking of two new pits, and £17,000 was added to the undivided balance, the sum of £38,831 being carried forward. Just imagine that company appealing to this House not to pass this Bill for fear they should be ruined. They paid a 30 per cent. dividend, they placed £70,000 to a sinking fund, and they took more money to do something else, and when the men who had the making of the dividend asked this House for a shortening of the working day the Miners Association of Great Britain, representing the coalowners, sent out circulars stating that if the Bill was passed great injury would be done to mining in particular, and to the industries of Britain in general. He would just give one further quotation. This was a circular sent to him as a Member of Parliament. It was a circular teeming and pulsating with love of humanity he supposed. It said—

> "As a private consumer of coal, as well as a gas consumer and a shareholder in a gas company, I shall be seriously affected by the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill if it should become law. There appears to be no doubt whatever that the effect of the enactment of this Bill would be to add very materially to the cost of coal, which is at present very high and would consequently increase the price of gas, and cause a diminution in gas shares, without conferring any corresponding benefit upon the community in general, or the miner in particular."

He liked that "miner in particular." It rounded off the sentence. It was because he represented the miner in particular that he stood here and congratulated the Government upon introducing the measure and asked the House to give them full support. Something had been said about the health of miners, and the death rate. The House would be surprised to learn that there was no pit in the United Kingdom where there was any kind of sanitary arrangement. The Home Secretary had spoken about nystagmus. He would be surprised if a shorter day had no influence on that awful disease. What was the genesis of miners' nystagmus? It was the working of long hours in the absence of daylight. After men who suffered from that disease had been out of the pits for a year or a year and a half they recovered and were able to work again. The Eight Hours Bill would prevent men from working long hours in the mines with artificial light, and that would have a great tendency to check the disease. They now knew that the death rate of miners was appalling. There were 670 Members of the House. Last year there were nearly twice that number of miners swept into eternity without a moment's notice. There were 1,245 deaths, and that awful toll of the mining industry was paid in producing coal. The time had come when the House must recognise that the most valuable asset of the nation was its human life, and it was because they believed that this Bill would do something to ennoble and uplift men who were rendering great service to the State that he and his friends had no hesitation in supporting it. They had been told about the power of their unions. No one knew better than they did themselves the power of their unions. They had spent their lives in building them up. But when people told them that they need not come to Parliament it was rank hypocrisy. If they opposed the Bill, let them do so fearlessly, but let them not say that the Bill was unnecessary because the miners had power to settle the matter for themselves. He said to the House, not as a threat, but as a strong-soul conviction, that if the Government allowed itself to be browbeaten after the miners had waited twenty years, he would not come to the House again and ask the enactment of an eight hours day. They would use the power of the trade unions, not because they wanted to do it, but because Parliament, which was the proper tribunal for settling matters of this kind, had refused to accept the responsibility for this great national reform. The miners were unanimously in favour of the Bill. There was a time when the miners stood disunited, but at this moment all the miners from the North of Scotland to the West of Wales were behind the Federation in demanding that the matter should be settled by legislative enactment. It was because they wished to avoid strikes and lock-outs and to bring the question of hours out from the arena of contested questions that they supported the Bill. They did not want to use the power of the federation to compel employers to adopt an eight hours day. The interests of the industries of the nation required that the matter should be taken out of the zone of contested questions, and that all fear of strikes should be removed. It was with much confidence that they asked the House to give the Bill a Second Reading, if not unanimously, at least by a splendid majority.

*MR. BALDWIN (Worcestershire, Bewdley) said he was very grateful for the chance of saying a few words on this most important Bill and of speaking from the point of view of the class which he and his family had represented for four or five generations. They belonged to a class which to-day was thought little of, though it had played some part in the State—the class once called masters, then employers of labour, and now capitalists, and, in the stress of elections, capitalists with an epithet in front of it. It had been of some interest to him in listening to the debate to find how the miners' union was going to lead the Government on a line where he least expected to see them. He fought the last general election as a tariff reformer and was beaten, and one of the things that beat him was the cry from one end of the constituency to the other that the country should take care of the consumer and the producer would take care of himself. Now the miners' representatives came before them to-night and said: "Take care of the producer, and let the consumer go to the text-books of political economy." He noticed also that the supporters of the Government were not particularly anxious to endorse the lead given to them by hon. Members below the gangway. It might be invidious of him to specify, but he thought the strongest speeches which had been delivered against the Bill that night had come from Gentlemen sitting behind the mover of the Bill. It might seem hardly necessary for hon. Members on the Opposition side to rise and oppose the Bill when they had had such admirable diatribes against it from the hon. Member for Brighton and the hon. Member for Gloucester. He was not yet sufficiently acquainted with the procedure of the House of Commons to understand how the hon. Member for Gloucester after his excellent speech proposed to vote for the Bill. Doubtless when he had been a Member as long as the hon. Member for Gloucester he would understand that and many other things likewise. There was one point that no words could alter, and he thought the eloquent words of the hon. Member for South Glamorganshire had really only tended to throw dust in the eyes of the House. It was no argument in favour of the Bill to say that the coalowners had made large profits, and to instance one or two of the most successfully managed and long-established concerns in South Wales. It would be as fair if he were to say in his capacity as an employer of labour to the leader of a trade union that he should speed up all his men to the level of the best men working in the trade. He would say that that was a ridiculous thing to ask as the men must work according to the average strength. In the same way they could not gauge the average condition of the mining industry by taking one or two collieries. They had to look and see how the rank and file were managed, taking good years and bad years in turn. There had been one point which had been emphasised from the beginning and which had always impressed him. He would like to say, if it were not egotistical, that in speaking of any question where capital and labour were involved, the personal equation must be considered. He might mention, not as of any interest to the House, but merely as showing what the House might expect from him in the way of fair debate, that although his family had been engaged for 130 years in trade, the disputes they had had with their men could be numbered on the fingers of one hand. He himself had been in active business for twenty years, and had never had the shadow of a dispute with any of his own men, and they had given their men in the sheet-rolling trade an eight-hours day long before the question excited any interest in the House or the country. Therefore, when he spoke against the Bill he might be acquitted of speaking as a man who was constitutionally against the interests of working men. He claimed to speak as honestly against the Bill as he believed they supported it. He could not himself see a way out of the following dilemma, if the Bill became law. He might be wrong, but it seemed to him that the production of the pits was bound to be lessened; and if the production was lessened, unless the men get a rise in wages he could not see how they were going to be any better off. If the men got a rise in wages the price of coal must go up, and he could not see how the consumer was going to get any benefit. If, on the other hand, the wages did not rise, the men would have to do more work to get the same money than they did now. He fully acknowledged that in some districts in England it would be impossible and undesirable to try and speed up the work of the men in the pits. He knew that that would be impossible in the Staffordshire district, and in the South Wales district of which he knew something. He did not think, for a moment, that the men were going to sacrifice the short days or the days which they took off to level up an equal amount of work they must do during the entire week. If hon. Members put themselves in the position of colliers they would realise what their life meant. Any man who had to work in an office would rather work for nine hours a day with the chance of getting off for the day now and then, or a short day, than be compulsorily levelled down to work eight hours every day in the week. It seemed to him that many men who were following the leaders of the union in South Wales did not realise what it would mean to them if they had to sacrifice their short day and their off-days and fill up the time through the week. He had not the slightest doubt that the employers of labour in the coal trade, if the Bill became law, would do everything loyally and honestly in conjunction with the unions to make the Bill work as satisfactorily as possible. But he very much dreaded the immediate results. His own feeling was that the demand for higher wages was almost certain to follow the passing of the Bill into law. That demand would come upon them in a time of falling trade, and it was quite possible that the first result of the Act would be to plunge the coal trade into a very serious state of strife. Looking beyond that, he felt very little doubt in his own mind that the trade as a whole would benefit, provided only that the price of coal would not be raised so as to diminish the demand for the products of the pit. If the price was not too much raised there was no doubt that the coalowners and the miners would not suffer, whatever the general trade of the country would do. There was one clause in the Bill that opened, he believed, the way to a great deal of trouble. He meant Clause 4, which allowed the Government to interfere in cases of great economic disturbance. It seemed to him a curious thing that the party in the country which professed to oppose all interference with commerce so far as they safely could, should put such a clause in the Bill which would enable the Secretary of State at any time considerably to increase the earning powers of any colliery he might think fit to grant facilities to. That was too much power to put into the hands of any Government or any individual member of a Government. As to the promoters of the Bill, he did not mean with regard to the godparents whose names were on the back of the Bill, but the real parents, the Miners' Federation: he realised as fully as any man in the House what the Miners' Federation had done for the miners and for the coal trade of the country throughout the greater part of two generations. There was no doubt that sixty or seventy years ago the position of the colliers was that of slaves, and there was equally no doubt that owing partly to the action of the unions and partly to a better instructed public opinion, the position of the miners now compared favourably with that of any section of the working classes of the United Kingdom. The Miners' Federation itself was the strongest in the Kingdom, and the men they sent to represent them were amongst the ablest Members in the House; and from his own experience in dealing with the members of the union they had always been able to carry out their business with them swiftly, without difficulty, and with satisfaction to both parties. But he could not help feeling that the

Miners Federation, in the action they had taken in pushing this measure on the Government, were running no little risk of sacrificing to some extent the position they had with large numbers of the people of the country, who were not directly interested in business or in their unions. It seemed to him that a great many men whose entire sympathies were with trade unionists in the past would look at it in this way. They would say that the miners were pushing this measure without any consideration for the interest of the commonwealth, but only in the interest of their own unions, and they might feel that they were benefiting the members of a rich and prosperous union at the expense of other people less fortunately circumstanced. [Ironical "Hear, hear!" from hon. Members on the LABOUR Benches.] He did not expect for one moment hon. Members to agree with him; but he did not say it to gain a cheer from his friends around him, but because he believed it most earnestly. He believed that they were helping to deepen the opinion that the present Government were rapidly alienating the support of the middle and lower middle classes who helped to put them in power three years ago, and he believed that that very work was being rapidly aided by the line the miners' union was taking in forcing a Bill of this kind on the Government and on the House. He might be entirely wrong, but that was his belief, and he would not be acting honestly to the House if he did not give expression to it. In the short time he had been in the House he had been very much struck with what had been called in all quarters the experimental nature of the legislation passed. The Territorial Army was an experiment. They had been told by members of the Government that the Old-Age Pensions Bill was an experiment. He supposed that the mere fact that it was an incomplete Bill was the justification for their granting to it an incomplete discussion. But here they had the most experimental piece of legislation they had yet had. It was an experiment not only with a great trade, but indirectly with every trade in the country, and it was noteworthy that while it had only half-hearted support from the Treasury Bench it had had no support from hon. Members behind it. It had had unanimous support from hon. Members below the gangway, and as unanimous a condemnation from the Opposition Benches. He could not see any other course than to record his vote against this Bill.

*MR. WALSH said that when he came into this House as the representative of a constituency which was almost wholly a mining division, he was under the impression that the Bill whose fortunes had been before the House for so many years—or at least the central principle had been debated for nearly the last twenty years in this House—was not a matter of ordinary party politics. He had indeed found from one's reading and from one's knowledge of trade unions that many of the leading Conservatives in recent Parliaments had supported the principle of an Eight Hours Bill for miners. When he himself moved the Second Reading of their own Bill last year he congratulated the House upon the fact that the principle of the measure had never been looked upon as one of ordinary party controversy. He was surprised at the attitude now taken up by certain Members of the Opposition when the Government itself, in pursuance of a pledge which had not been wrung from them, brought forward this Bill. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh!"] Let him point out that most of the Members of the present Cabinet for the last twenty years had been pledged to support a Miners Eight Hours Bill. It was, therefore, very unfair for hon. Members to charge the Government, under those circumstances, with bringing forward this measure at the bidding of the Miners' Federation. It was a regrettable fact that, for the sake of party capital, a large number of those associated with the Conservative Party who might, on ordinary occasions be held to support this principle, had now felt themselves compelled to vote against this measure. [An OPPOSITION MEMBER: We always have.] In reply to that interruption he would remind the hon. Member that the right hon. Member for West Birmingham, the Under-Secretary for the Home Department in the last Government, and many hon. Members now sitting on the Conservative side were, until quite recently, supporters of the measure, and on the last occasion when the Bill was before the House, there was not a single dissentient voice from the Opposition Benches. He was aware that party capital was responsible for a great many changes. Archimedes, having discovered the principle of the lever, gave vent to the expression "Eureka." The Opposition had long been in search of a weapon to use for a party advantage, and they had taken up the cry: "Your coal will cost you more." This seemed to have supplied them with the political lever of which they stood so much in need. If there was one statement with which he disagreed in the speech of the hon. Member for South Glamorgan it was what he said in regard to the action of the employers on this question. With that exception he agreed with the whole of the hon. Member's excellent speech. He believed that, after all, the opposition of the employers and the coal owners of the country had been an honest opposition, and it had been the opposition of people who were broadly acquainted with the facts. It was the opposition of people who put forward fair facts and fair arguments, and although he believed they were mistaken, he had never believed that they were either dishonest or unfair. But the arguments recently advanced, and the vituperation and blatant nonsense indulged in by the Coal Consumers League, had removed the argument to quite another plane altogether. In recent elections these gentlemen had told the electors that if the Miners Eight Hours Bill were passed, the increase in the cost of coal would be anything from 3d. to 5d. per cwt. He had himself been quoted many times in the debate, and the hon. Member for Windsor was kind enough to withdraw the statement he first made to the House. He quoted at Wigan in April last the case of forty-eight pits in South-west Lancashire. At every one of those pits there was an actual working price list drawn up showing the price per ton paid to the hewers, which included, also, the price paid to the drawers. Now the average hours worked at those forty-eight pits where the wages were the highest were the longest in the whole of South-west Lancashire. There the average price paid per ton was 2s. 9d. for two men, the collier and his drawer, and hon. Members would recognise a very great difference between that 2s. 9d., and the 23s., 24s., and 29s. per ton paid for coal by the London consumers. On the same occasion, he pointed out that if the hours of labour were reduced, as they probably would be, by one-tenth, it might very well follow that one-eighth of that would be placed upon the actual hewing price, making 4d. per ton, and for the other classes of labour there might be 2d. per ton allowed. That was, of course, assuming that there was no increase in the efficiency of the work, and that neither the employers nor the workmen would come together and revise the conditions under which they carried on their industry. That was too great an assumption, and much too large an order. In every case the employer and the workmen would set their minds to seeing how they could make the best of the altered conditions. There was not a single industry in which the eight hours day had been established which had not resulted in improved conditions, and, indeed, a greater output, and why should they assume that that which had been so constantly the case in other industries would be falsified entirely when applied to the mining industry? The system established at Messrs. Mather and Platt's, at Manchester, and in other cases, proved that more work and also a better quality of work was done with a shorter working day. The Opposition also assumed that production was at its fullest and completest point at the present time, but that was not the case at all. In 1905, the total output of coal was 235,000,000 tons, in 1906 it was 251,000,000 tons, but in 1907 the total was 268,000,000 tons. That showed that in two years there was an increased output of coal, amounting to 33,000,000 tons, and this in an industry which was supposed to have reached its highest points of productivity some years ago. Therefore, the facts disproved the whole contention upon which opposition to this Bill was based. He was not surprised to find in the remarks of the Home Secretary some little show of diplomatic hesitation as to the length of time that should elapse before the change suggested in the Bill should be brought about in its completeness. They offered the right hon. Gentleman their congratulations upon bringing in the Bill, because of the central principle it contained, but he need not be afraid that a shortening of the hours of labour would be attended with the danger anticipated. The facts were that where the hours of labour were the shortest in the mines, there the conditions were the safest. Taking the Committee's Report, Durham, where the hewer worked six and three-quarter hours per day on the average, was the safest mining district in the whole kingdom, and conversely those pits that worked the longest hours were the most dangerous. He thought it might be said without fear of contradiction that the portion of South Wales where the longest hours were worked gave the greatest proportion of both fatal accidents and disablements. They need not be afraid of any shrinkage in the total output, because, as a matter of fact, there was a great power of expansion both in the productivity and the intelligence of both employers and workmen. The employers would set their minds to new methods of production and improvements upon the old methods, and the men would give a more regular attendance. When a man was working at a coal face, in many cases a good deal less than a yard in height, in a vitiated atmosphere, where gases abounded, and sometimes where gas did not abound there was a great deal of water, and where he had to contend with the risks of accident—he was not using the language of exaggeration when he said that in many cases the miners' places were little better than a common sewer—could they wonder that, after eleven or twelve hours one day, he lay idle the following day? They believed that if this Bill became law and a man worked eight hours per day he would have such an interval for decent rest and repose as well, if they liked, for intellectual recreation, as would enable him to attend far more regularly and do far better labour for his employer than he was able to do under existing conditions. If they did not believe that, all their arguments for the Bill would be gone. The last hon. Member who spoke stated that he thought it perfectly proper to say that the condition of a miner fifty or sixty years ago, a term of two generations, was little better than of a slave, but that, owing largely to the miners' organisations, his conditions had improved a great deal, and that the unions were rich and prosperous. Perhaps there was no subject upon which so much, he was going to say nonsense, but that would be unparliamentary, and he would say upon which so little wisdom was uttered as upon the question of the miners' unions. They were very seldom rich, they were hardly ever prosperous, and, after all, they were not nearly so powerful as they loomed in the imagination of hon. Gentlemen. They were very restricted in their power, and only two or three years ago their power was taken away altogether by the law of the land. They were not only enfeebled, but they were rendered entirely impotent. He did not remember that hon. Gentlemen to his right ever gave them very much assistance in getting that power back again. Indeed, the House would be surprised probably to know that, although during the last thirty years the productivity of the miner had been going up year by year, and although the conditions in the mines, he must admit, had been in many cases made very much better than they were before, yet, throughout the greater part of Lancashire, notwithstanding their boasted improvements, they were working to-day from 10 to 20 per cent. longer hours than they were thirty years ago. He did not know whether he ought to trouble the House with his own experience, but when he commenced in the mine thirty-five years ago they always had on the reckoning Saturday a short day. The whole pit was cleared by twelve o'clock. On the Friday before the pay day they broke up at two, and they had a reckoning Monday, and indeed a good many reckoning Tuesdays. All that had vanished. There were no short days now, except an occasional Saturday, when it was the usual thing in Lancashire to break up at two o'clock, and the pits, which at that time were working up to four o'clock in the afternoon, were now, most of them, working till half-past five. The young lad was often down the pit soon after five o'clock, and the boy under sixteen went down at six, and was supposed to come up just after four. He did ten hours in the mine. There were thousands and thousands of young fellows with their limbs not set, their minds not expanded, who, in the most adaptable part of their lives, went into the pits between five and six in the morning and came out again between five and six at night. The question had been mainly debated from the point of view of health. Was there nothing besides health which should appeal to a Parliament representing the whole combined interest of the State? Was there no social aspect which the House should consider? What were they going to make of these young people? Their technical institutions were a failure. Why? First of all because boys left school too quickly, and secondly because they were no sooner taken away from school than they had during the greater part of the day to work under conditions such as he had described. In the greater part of Lancashire, particularly in the mining districts, it was admitted, speaking in a broad, general sense, that technical education had been very largely a failure. It was said that miners did not suffer through lack of health, but was there nothing in the admitted fact that the Manchester recruiting area gave a greater percentage of rejections than any other part of the United Kingdom? He made bold to say that there were large numbers of miners, although not completely broken down, whose health was such that they could not pass the recruiting master, and were not such material upon which they could build the Empire. They asked the House to give its serious consideration to the question from points of view other than the mere restricted trade union point of view. They put their plea forward mainly on behalf of the young. Men of his own age, nearly fifty years of age, were rapidly being harried out of the mines. The employers were finding out that they were not capable of doing the work, and they were being quietly shunted. The man of from forty-five to fifty was finding himself in a position of great insecurity. He found it difficult to retain his employment. when in it, and almost impossible to get employment when out of it. Should not that be included in the general question of health? He noticed about a fortnight ago a great colliery company declared its dividend. He referred to that of Messrs. Pease and Partners. There had been no interference with the hours of labour. They were working the shortest hours of any county in the Kingdom, and the statement was made by the chairman and directors that their output of coal had reached the highest point in the whole history of the company. It had reached the high-water mark of over 2,000,000 tons. He painted in most alarming colours what would be the effect if this Miners' Eight Hours Bill became law—the most terrible things would take place—and he concluded by declaring the usual 12½ per cent. dividend. As a matter of fact it all went to prove his contention that the limit of expansion of both employer and workmen had not yet been found. If the employers, as he honestly believe they would should this Bill become law, set themselves to find out means whereby their workmen and their machinery could be brought to the highest state of efficiency, he did not believe they need despair, and he was quite certain that the workmen would combine in the same way to bring about the best results. If he might be allowed to say so they congratulated the Home Secretary on bringing the Bill forward for the first time in twenty-one years as a Government measure. They pressed for it on three grounds—first of all, on the broad grounds of humanity. It was a humanitarian Bill. It would give them new life and new hope and the nation itself a new start. As a matter of fact the nation had no higher asset than its young lads, and he did not think it had any higher asset anywhere, in any industries, than its young miners. It was impossible to value their well-being too highly. They pressed for this Bill on its social aspect. The men in the mines—the husbands, fathers, and brothers—had a right to a happier home life than they were enjoying at present, and those who were dependent upon them had a right to a greater share of their society. They put it also from the point of view of industrial organisation. Society itself would be better. Our common humanity would be better, and the organisation of industry would be better, because it would be regularised, and that would be placed in something like decent working order, which at present, was chaotic and irregular. There had been no industry so subject to change, to jumps and alterations, as the coal mining industry. That was admitted on all hands. The Bill would do something to regularise the whole conditions, and he believed the time would come when every man who to-day was opposing this measure wouldadmit, when it once became law and had got into actual working operation, that he had been mistaken, that it had had none of the direful results which had been prognosticated, and that it had become a great boon to the country.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said he did not propose to trouble the House at any length, but often as this Bill had been brought before the House, he had never spoken on it before. He would like to clear the ground if possible for a few minutes by asking the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the measure if he could not see his way to make the division on the Bill an entirely non-party division. In numerous speeches that he had made to deputations he had said, that so far as the House of Commons was concerned, there was only one opinion on the Bill. That being so it was quite unnecessary to put forward the Government Whips or to let it be known that Members voting against the Bill were voting against the Government. If it was made known that it was purely optional they would get the true opinion of the House. There would be very great advantage in that.

*MR. GLADSTONE: My hon. friend forgets that he had an opportunity of opposing it last year and the year before, and he never did it.

*MR. LUPTON said that he got up to speak and was closured. The right hon. Gentleman himself closured him, and when the Question was put his was the only voice that said No. He thought he was correct in saying that for many years past no candidate for either party had stood for a constituency where there was any appreciable number of colliers without pledging himself to support the Bill. Let the right hon. Gentleman observe the great strategic advantage it would be not to have party whips. Supposing Cassandra was right this time as she was once before. The right hon. Gentleman would be able to say: "We did not put on the Government Whip. The thing had been debated for twenty years, we just brought in a Bill to regularise things, the House of Commons carried it and let the effect be on its own head." He was an ardent party man. He was an ardent supporter of the Liberal Party, and he thought the Bill would probably have such a destructive effect on that party if it was carried by Government Whips, that he hoped other Liberals would rise before the discussion was over, whether in favour of the Bill or against it, and ask that it should be the pure expression of opinion of the House. Here was this great historic House of Commons going to legislate on a matter of detail in the prime industry of the country, the industry on which all other industries depended. The right hon. Gentleman thought he was mistaken. He had a right to think so, but supposing for the sake of argument that he was not mistaken. Why should he run that risk? Why should the House run that risk? It was by far the most important Bill, in his opinion, that had ever been before the House; and the Second Reading was to be discussed on one night. Anyone who had heard the speeches that night must recognise that there were so many important facts to be cleared up and important opinions to be considered that it was really impossible for the greater part of the House to get to understand them. There was the hon. Member for Ince. He never heard him speak without wishing to vote with him, and to do what he asked him. He spoke so nicely. He recognised that there might be honest differences of opinion. He hoped the Government would recognise that and would not put on their Whips. There were plenty of enthusiasts for the measure—plenty of hon. Members connected with miners' unions who would be proud to tell. He hoped the Government would yield to his appeal.

The question as to the rise in the price of coal due to this Bill was twofold. There would be a permanent rise in price due to the curtailment of the hours of labour, and there would also be a temporary rise due to a coal famine caused by the change. The evidence went to show that there would be a permanent rise in price varying from nothing up to 3s. a ton, and the average for the whole country would be between 1s. and 1s. 6d. per ton, assuming the present standard of wages were maintained. What the future cost of getting coal would be, no one can say, because the present standard of wages might not be maintained. What would be the effect on prices of a temporary famine? Between 1898 and 1900 the price of the best coal varied at the pit's mouth between 6s. and 18s. per ton, and that was simply because the demand happened to overtake the supply. That was best coal. The average price of coal and slack rose from 4s. 6d. at the pit's mouth in 1888 to 9s. in 1900. If hon. Members clearly understood those points it would alter very materially their appreciation of the arguments used in favour of the Bill. Somebody had spoken about the effect of the reduction of the number of hours to eight. He did not wish to detain the House, but one of his qualifications for speaking on this subject was that he had been engaged in this particular kind of work practically all his life, and for more than forty years he had had practical acquaintance with it. There was not a single thing about a mine that he had not designed upon the drawing board, not a single price in a mine which he had not fixed, and, therefore, he claimed to speak with some knowledge on the subject. Nobody could allege that he had no regard for the colliers' cause, because he had not only lived with them but he had also worked with them down in the mine. He agreed that miners were the finest lot of men in the world, but his hon. friends behind him must remember that it was necessary occasionally to differ from them. The hon. Members with whom he had a little difference of opinion on this question were very good friends of his, and he had never been anything else but a friend to them. He had tried the eight-hours system himself, and why did he select the eight-hours shift? It was simply a question of arithmetic. There were twenty-four hours in a day, and if they divided that by three they got three shifts of eight hours as a working day for colliers. Twice in his life he had started two large collieries on the eight-hours system, and twice it had been changed to nine hours with the full approval of the men. He was not in favour of the Bill, because he was in favour of leaving people to manage their own affairs. The coal industry had doubled in thirty years. In 1878 there were 133,000,000 tons of coal raised in this country, but in 1907 the total was 267,000,000 tons. The number of the men employed had also doubled during the same period. In 1878 they had 383,000 men employed in mines underground, and now they had a total of 757,000 employed in coal mines. By the time the Bill came into operation in 1910 the output of coal would probably have reached 300,000,000 tons and the number of men employed in the pits 830,000. Therefore, any percentage ought to be calculated upon the basis of a production of 300,000,000 tons of coal. If they placed the reduction at 5 per cent. that would mean a decrease in the production of 15,000,000 tons. But that might have the effect of sending up the price of coal by 50 per cent. If there was an artificial decrease in the output of 5 per cent., there might be much more than an increase of 50 per cent. in the price. If the hon. Member for Windsor erred at all, he erred on the side of moderation, and that was why he was there to oppose the Bill. He thought it was a great pity that the industries of the country should be imperilled. Nobody had more sympathy than he with the miners in regard to the long hours they worked. But he also had to think of the millions of other men who might be turned out of work, and of the men, women, and children who might be starved on the streets, if, on account of the increase in the price of coal, employment could not be obtained. These were the people he pleaded for, and he thought the House should pause before it passed a Bill which might have a disastrous effect on the trade of the country. He thought the right hon. Gentleman in his speech showed that, although there was a shortage in the output caused by the strike which took place in 1893, the price during the whole year was very low. The reason partly was that there were contracts current at the time. The purchaser of coal paid for it according to his expectations at the time the purchase was made. Nobody expected the strike to occur, and when it did take place it was believed that it would come to an end in a few weeks. Prices during the strike did not go up permanently in the same way as they would do if there was a restriction by law of the hours of labour during a long period. But during the strike coal was sold at 20s. a ton at the pit. He was not taking into account the Amendment which the right hon. Gentleman meant to propose, but, taking the Bill as it stood, if it were to pass, the reduction in the output and the increase in the price of coal would mean that the public would have to pay £120,000,000 a year extra for their coal. This sort of thing happened once before. The Home Secretary had referred to 1872 when a Bill was passed affecting the coal trade, and in the next three years the public had to pay £100,000,000 extra on account of the supply not equalling the demand. If the passing of this Bill would mean that the public would have £120,000,000 a year more to pay for their coal, how long would that be likely to last? Not very long, because with the extra prices the iron trade would be seriously hampered. The production of iron would be reduced, and other trades would be injured, while there would be greater economy exercised in the consumption of household coal. He had heard it said that a reduction in the hours of labour would not necessarily mean a reduction in the output. An hon. Member had said that the men would speed up their work during the shorter time they were employed. He was rather surprised to hear him say that. He had known colliers all his life, and he thought they worked very hard. He had watched colliers work, and he knew that nobody but trained men could do the work they did. A collier struck sixty blows a minute, and it was only a trained man who could do that. If the hours were reduced he did not think it would be a good thing to speed up the work. If they were going to drive men at a great pace, they would kill them. He saw no reason for the racing and the hurrying that was going to be introduced by the Bill. Why should not miners occasionally go gently as well as other people? It was good for them. If they looked at the Report of the Departmental Committee they would see that the miners as a body were as fine fellows as there were in any part of the world. His own experience of work was that one did it better and with more ease if one got a good meal in the middle of the day. This Bill was going to stop the mid-day meal. When a man went down a pit he might take half-an-hour to walk to the face, and by that time he wanted to sit down a little. Very likely he had got very little breakfast before leaving home, and after working for three or four hours he would be ready for something more, and so he would sit down and finish the portion he had brought with him and have a chat with his fellows. The effect of this Bill would be to deprive these men of these intervals of rest which were so necessary for their health and strength. It was a most cruel Bill. The collier was very skilful in trying to escape from danger in the pits, and the death-rate from accidents had fallen during the last fifty-six years (from 1851 to 1907) per 1,000 men employed underground from 5·45 to 1·14, or to a little more than a fourth of what it was. A great deal had been said about the health of miners. He always understood that the collier was more healthy than most agricultural labourers; at least he came second after the agricultural labourer. Again, in Yorkshire, where the miners only worked eight hours, the death-rate was higher than the death-rate of miners in Derbyshire, where they worked nine hours, so that the death-rate might be due to special circumstances in different localities. The death-rate of men who worked in the potteries was double that of the miners, and that of general labourers was also greater than that of colliers. Why did not the Government introduce a measure to shorten the hours of potters and general labourers? He did not think that the case for the Bill on the death-rate was at all proved. It was said that the health of workers depended on the hours they worked; but he asked was the present generation any stronger than their forefathers? These worked twelve hours a day, and were really very fine men. It had been said that they could increase the output of the pits by improving the machinery; but it would take years to make those improvements in the machinery. He had known coal-cutting machines for forty years, and his opinion was that their employment was not always an economical way of getting the coal. The idea that they would prevent the reduction of output by improved coal-cutting and winding machinery was altogether illusory. Plenty of collieries to-day would increase their output if they could get the colliers, but all the colliers worth having were fully employed. That did not mean to say that there was no collier walking from one pit to another. There would always be a percentage of colliers who were walking from one pit to another looking for a change. It was said, however, they would lose less time. If they were going to put in more days, how would the reduction in hours work? Was it more healthy for the collier to work six days of eight hours each, or four days of ten hours each? A man who worked four days and had three play days, if he spent his play day wisely, as some of them did, would live longer and have better health than if he was forced down into the pit six days in the week. If they had a long way to walk underground, that was the worst part of the day's work. He had done it and knew what it was. Would he sooner work four days a week of ten hours each, or six days a week of eight hours? This measure would compel a man to go six days a week down the pit, he would do more walking to and from his work, and when he got to his place he would in some cases do less work to make it worth his while going. Then fancy raising men up and down in a hurry. Everything was done quickly now. He would not keep the House much longer, but if it was worth passing the Bill at all, it was worth discussing it. What was it that they were asked to do by the Bill? They were asked to vote that the collier should only be allowed to work for one hour out of six and a half. Was the House really prepared to vote for such a wide principle as that? He thought it was monstrous. He might be asked how he got at that. It was very simply got at. According to the Bill they made it eight hours from bank to bank, and they took half an hour each way. That left seven hours in the working place. There must be half an hour for rest. That left six and a half hours of actual work in the working place, supposing there was no hindrance. Six and a half hours for five days a week was thirty-two and a half, and one day of six hours—Saturday—was thirty-eight and a half. But the pits did not work every day. In an average of years the pits played at least one day a week. There were four holidays—Christmas, Easter, Whitsunside, and Bank Holiday—and the annual village feast, and then many colliers took a week's holiday besides. That reduced the work by at least half a day a week. There was other loss of time, and the result was that on the whole year they only did four days work a week on the average. Instead of getting thirty-eight and a half hours they only get four days of six and a half hours, *i.e.*, twenty-six hours out of 168. They were asked to pass a law to make it illegal to work more than one hour in six and a half. The men best able to form a clear opinion were mining engineers. A friend of his tried the experiment and reduced the hours from nine to eight, and the reduction in output was 27 per cent. How it came to be as great as that he did not know, but he knew that in one pit with eight-hour shifts the men were earning 6s. 5d. per day. Now, at their request the hours were altered to nine and they put on two shifts. The wages went up from 6s. to 7s. That showed that the hours did affect the wages. A great deal had been said about the difference between one part of the country and another. Anybody who knew anything about mining knew that. In Yorkshire, for instance, they were already having an eight-hours day, though not such a day as was given by the Bill. The Bill, therefore, would not have so much effect upon shortening the hours there. But in the Forest of Dean, and in some other parts of the country as well, it would have a ruinous effect. He thought it would be far better to leave the decision as to whether the Bill should be put into operation or not to the county councils. There would be then some chance of its not being adopted in those counties where it was not actually wanted.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned.—(*Mr. Bonar Law.*)

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said that he and those associated with him felt compelled to object to the Motion for the adjournment of the debate. They failed to see why that step should be taken. The eleven o'clock rule at the early part of the sitting was suspended on the Motion of the Prime Minister, with the definite object of a division being taken that night. The promoters, or at any rate those who had for years brought in a private measure having for its object the setting up of an eight-hours day in mines, felt that they had waited sufficiently long and that now they had entered upon the discussion it ought to be continued until one way or the other the question had been definitely decided by the vote of the House. It might be that representatives of the Government, or those for whom the hon. Gentleman had moved the adjournment of the debate, could give a satisfactory reason why the adjournment should take place, but he was in the House early in the evening, and he saw not more than one Member behind the hon. Gentleman rise to continue the discussion. It was quite true that hon. Members rose on the other side of the House, but he did not think they would object, having regard to the fact that the Prime Minister moved the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule, to remain an hour or two longer, if they had such a strong desire to make speeches on the question, in order that their speeches might be made and a vote ultimately taken. If the Motion was persevered with, they would carry their protest to a division.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I had hoped, by suspending the eleven o'clock rule, we might have brought this debate to a conclusion at a reasonable hour, but communications have reached me from all sides of the House that there are many gentlemen who wish to take part in the debate, and I think it would be very unsatisfactory to the House if we were to come to a conclusion at two o'clock in the morning. The question has been discussed for a great number of years, and I had hoped that a single day would have sufficed, but it appears that that is not the opinion of the House, and in a matter of this importance I do not think it wise to force the House against its will to come to a summary decision. In assenting to the Motion for the adjournment of the debate, I must say that the continuation of the debate cannot take place this week or next, but I will endeavour to provide a day or half a day the week after, when I hope we shall be able to come to a final decision upon the matter.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 290; Noes, 145. (Division List No. 129.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn. Sir Alex. F
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Armitage, R.
Ashley, W. W.
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Beckett, Hon. Gervase

Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J. H (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bramsdon, T. A.
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cave, George
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. Hn J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co.)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Dobson, Thomas W.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duckworth, James
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Forster, Henry William
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gretton, John
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Haddock, George B.
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harmsworth, Cecil B. Worc'r.)
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hedges, A. Paget
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hill, Sir Clement
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Horniman, Emslie John
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hunt, Rowland
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Magnus, Sir Philip
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlebrook, William
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mond, A.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanier, Beville

Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walton, Joseph
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wason,Rt Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,JohnCathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Williamson, A.
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, A. Stanley(York,E.R.)
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. York, W. R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Barnes, G. N.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bell, Richard
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs.,Leigh)
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalmeny, Lord
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Devlin, Joseph
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn SirW.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Hodge, John
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope,W.Bateman(Somerset,N.
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lamb, Edmund G.(Leominster
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras, E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Killop, W.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A.(Queen'sCo.
Menzies, Walter
Mooney, J. J.
Murphy, N. J. (Kilkenny, S.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncaster
Nolan, Joseph
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary, Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James N. (Roscommon
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pollard, Dr.
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Raphael, Herbert H.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards,T.F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Robinson, S.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
White, Patrick (Meath, North)
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmart'n
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Charles Duncan.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 23rd June, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Stockport Corporation Bill.—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Seaham Harbour Dock Bill; Louth and East Coast Railway (Transfer) Bill.—Reported, with an Amendment.

North - East London Railway Bill; Bury and District Joint Water Board Bill; Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Reported, without Amendment.

Glyncorrwg Urban District Council Bill; Southwell District Gas Bill; Bromley and Crays Gas Bill.—Reported, with Amendments.

Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Bill.—The King's consent signified; and Bill reported, with Amendments.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House Tomorrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.—Committed.

Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Committed.

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Committed.

Lincoln Corporation Bill; North-Eastern Railway Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.];. London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Leave given to the Select Committee not to sit to-morrow till two o'clock.

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with amendments.

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Paisley District Tramways Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^{a} (according to order), and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, (1899) deemed to have been reported from the Committee; and to be read 3^{a} on Thursday next.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3^{a} (according to order), and passed.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION (1908).

Code of regulations for public elementary schools in England (excluding Wales and Monmouthshire), with schedules.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of July, 1907.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 4027. Russia (Consular District of Rostov-on-Don).

No. 4028. France (Cochin-China).

No. 4029. France (Marseilles).

No. 4030. Netherlands (Rotterham and Flushing).

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Rules and programme of examinations for 1909.

COUNTY OFFICERS AND COURTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1877.

Account of receipts and payments under the Act during the year ended 31st March, 1908.

FINANCE ACCOUNTS.

Finance accounts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the financial year ended 31st March, 1908.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILLS.

NURSES REGISTRATION BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to Regulate the qualifications of trained nurses and to provide for their registration—Was presented by the Lord Ampthill; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Monday, 6th July next. (No. 107.)

MATRIMONIAL CAUSES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1857—Was presented by the Earl Russell; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Wednesday, 22nd July next. (No. 108.)

WEEKLY REST-DAY BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

VISCOUNT HILL: My Lords, the Bill which I am asking your Lordships to read a second time to-day is, as you are probably aware, promoted by the National Hygienic League, who have already been successful in getting their Juvenile Smoking Bill embodied in the Government's Children Bill. The object of the measure is to secure that every person working for an employer shall have the twenty-four hours of Sunday as a rest-day in each week, or, when Sunday labour is necessary, one Sunday of twenty-four hours uninterrupted in a fortnight, and a rest day during the intervening period. The clauses, as your Lordships will see, are all defined, and it is not necessary for me to go through them separately. Clause 4 provides exemptions in certain cases, and gives, in our opinion, sufficient elasticity in respect of employment of a special nature when it is impracticable for the employer to allow the person or persons employed the twenty-four hours rest which the Bill provides.

I may be asked what was the necessity for introducing the Bill at this time. It must, I think, be evident to all who have studied industrial conditions in different parts of the British Empire that Sunday work has increased greatly in the last few years, and we consider that a stage has been reached at which it is necessary that Parliament should intervene. Sunday employment, as we know, is of a varied character. The subject is not an easy one to deal with. It affects the financial interests and the prejudices and customs of large masses of the population; but the question must be faced sooner or later, and it ought to be examined calmly, and not, as is often the case, with bitterness and angry controversy.

I repudiate the suggestion which has been made by various bodies that this Bill is of the nature of faddist legislation. In the time of Charles II. a more stringent measure to secure Sunday observance was enforced; and certain Continental nations, who in past years have not observed Sunday, have seen the advantages arising from one day's rest in seven in this country, and have introduced legislation to obtain a similar rest. In Italy and Belgium such legislation is a great deal more stringent in character than the Bill now before your Lordships. We do not dictate in any way how the workman is to spend his Sunday; all we ask is that every person should have one day's rest in seven. It is admitted that there are certain industries in which it is almost impossible to avoid Sunday labour; and in the fourth clause of the Bill an endeavour has been made to give sufficient elasticity to the provisions to meet the need for Sunday employment.

The objections to the Bill are many and various, but I maintain that a number of its opponents have not really considered what the underlying principle of the measure is. We do not wish to inflict any hardship upon employers or employed; but we contend that every man, whatever his employment may be, is entitled to one day's rest in seven. If I were to go through the various industries and the different kinds of employment in the British Empire, I should not only weary your Lordships, but should no doubt find myself the only Peer in your Lordships' House. But there are one or two to which it is necessary that I should call attention as examples. Considerable complaint has been made as to the effect which the Bill would have upon men employed upon newspapers; but I understand that those employed upon daily newspapers have about forty hours rest at the end of every week, as they leave work between two and five o'clock on Saturday morning and do not resume their duties until six or seven o'clock on Sunday evening. While on the subject of newspapers, I may mention that in Italy newspapers are not exempt from the operation of the Sunday Observance Act. I think it extraordinary that Sunday newspapers should object to the Bill, for they give away their case by stating that many of the men employed upon them do no other work during the week. Evidently those men have plenty of rest. So much for the newspapers.

I now come to the police. The police, it is admitted on all sides, are the finest body of men in the world. A considerable amount of labour is expected from them, and from time to time the burden of their duties, which they discharge faithfully and well, has been increased enormously. I find that, on an average, members of the force receive only twenty days rest out of the 365, and they get practically very few Sundays off. These men are, many of them, married, and the consequence is that they see very little of their wives and families and are practically strangers in their own domicile. I shall probably be told that it would cost the country too much to carry out this reform in regard to the police. At Reading, however, the practice of giving members of the police force one day's rest in seven has been followed for a considerable time, and Captain Henderson, the Chief Constable, has stated that only seventeen additional men were needed to put that arrangement into operation. He finds that the result has been that the work is far better and more willingly performed, there is less sickness, and it is never necessary to advertise for recruits.

The men attached to the fire brigades are almost in a worse position than the police. They are continually on duty at the beck and call of the public. It would be, therefore, but fair to the police and the firemen that this difficulty should be overcome by a rearrangement of their duties, or by the appointment of a few extra men. I have not gone into the figures, but I believe £50,000 would be sufficient to carry out this arrangement in the police force of the Metropolis and obtain for each man therein one day's rest in seven. Then there is the industry of agriculture. I understand that the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture, whom I am glad to see in his place, is in sympathy with the object, though he does not altogether approve of the provisions, of this Bill. I am confident that in the majority of cases the farmers of this country would willingly arrange by some means or other that their labourers should have one day's rest in seven. I believe that something of the kind is in existence in Scotland to-day.

Then we are met with the difficulty as regards the distribution of milk. The distribution of milk in our large towns on Sunday has greatly increased of late years. It has come to such a state that many people who forget to procure necessaries on the Saturday ask their milkman to bring them round on Sunday afternoon. Here, again, there is room for improvement in the opportunities of rest that should be enjoyed by milkmen, and I have a number of letters from these men in which they state that though their labours are not heavy on Sundays yet they would be delighted if the provisions of this Bill securing them one day's rest in seven were to become law. I see that my noble friend Lord Heneage has given notice of an Amendment to move the rejection of this Bill. I understand that my noble friend is not altogether out of sympathy with me, but does not approve of the clauses in the Bill. To show the weakness of some of the arguments against the Bill I should like to read to your Lordships an extract from an article which appeared in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* on 8th June. The writer said—

> "At this rate a curate would only be allowed to officiate on alternate Sundays; so would the organist, the pew openers, and so on. Whether cows will oblige the farmers by ceasing to give milk on Sundays and so enable everybody connected with dairies to have a holiday is very doubtful. A person who was so foolish as to break his leg in a country village would have to wait till Monday to get it set, if he happened to break it on the hospital doctor's Sunday off. And babies would have to wait to be born until Sunday midnight."

I think that when a man writes that sort of thing in opposition to this Bill it shows great weakness and that he has not studied its underlying principles. The Bill would not result in any of those things. The work of curates—as I think the most rev. Primate would be able to explain—is not touched at all by the Bill.

I would urge this Bill upon your Lordships, not that we regard it by any means as a perfect Bill, but as an earnest endeavour to obtain that to which every human being is entitled—one day's rest in seven. Many noble Lords may have objections to it, but if they will only give the matter careful thought the difficulties can easily be overcome. I urge the House to consider the merits of the Bill with an open mind. It is neither a party nor a sectarian measure, but I believe that if its provisions are adopted it will tend to an improvement in the health and character of our public bodies, while interfering in no degree with the conscience of the individual as to how the day of rest should be spent. I beg to move.

Viscount Hill.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Viscount Hill.*)

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, I think it may be desirable at this early stage to state the view which His Majesty's Government take of this Bill. I am sure we shall all agree that the noble Viscount has made a very interesting speech, and for my own part I regret that it has not been followed by a speech from Lord Avebury, who has made the question of Sunday closing his own, but who is not able to be present in your Lordships' House this afternoon. For many years Lord Avebury has spoken upon this question in this House, and I am sure your Lordships would have been particularly glad to hear what he had to say on the noble Viscount's Bill, the main principle of which is very different indeed from that of the Bill with which Lord Avebury's name has been so long connected.

The majority of noble Lords will agree entirely with the general principle of one day's rest in seven, but, though we agree with the principle of the noble Viscount's Bill, I am afraid we must also consider the method in which the principle is to be made to work and the measure by which the noble Viscount is endeavouring to secure its enactment. It is when we come to consider the details that there is sure to be found a great divergence of opinion among the members of your Lordships' House. There will be, also, a fair amount of agreement that if there is to be greater respect shown for the Sunday in future the reform will have to be brought about by legislation rather than by any attempt at voluntary agreement among different classes of the community.

The noble Viscount referred to the fact that legislation somewhat similar in character has been passed in other countries, and I think your Lordships will agree with me that it is always of value to know what the experience of foreign countries is in connection with any particular legislation. I am permitted by my noble friend who represents the Foreign Office in this House to say that, if the noble Viscount were to address a request to him that the Foreign Office would obtain a Report, not only on the legislation, but on the way in which it is carried out and really observed, he would be very glad to give it his sympathetic consideration; and I cannot help thinking that such a Report would be of very considerable value in the consideration of the whole question.

To the Bill as it stands there are a number of objections on points of detail that I must point out to the noble Viscount. He poured scorn upon the article in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, but I am not at all sure that the various statements in that article were not justified. Certainly it is the opinion of a considerable number of people generally well able to understand legislation that this Bill, as it is presented to your Lordships, would, for example, prevent not only organists and attendants in churches, but even curates, from taking part in services on consecutive Sundays. I am sure your Lordships' House would be unwilling to pass legislation to that effect. Then Clause 5 seems to have been drawn in a way that would enable an employer who is a Jew to employ Jewish women and young persons in a factory or workshop on Sunday, not merely during hours allowed by the Factory Act, but for any number of hours he chose, no matter how excessive they might be. The Bill would also give the Jew and the Jewish *employe* considerable freedom from restriction, and, in fact, a monopoly of the Sunday market.

I confess I feel I ought to apologise to your Lordships for spending any time in criticising the details of the Bill. Criticism of detail is, perhaps, beside the point, because I am sure the noble Viscount would be only too ready to accept any suggestions from your Lordships which would tend to make the Bill more workable or more acceptable to this or the other House of Parliament. The real point is that the Bill has no chance whatever of being passed into law in its present shape and at this period of the session, and therefore it becomes a question whether it is worth your Lordships' while to allow the Bill to make any further progress during this session. An identical Bill has been introduced in the other House, but has no chance of making progress. I hope, therefore, that the noble Lord will content himself with having ventilated the subject and withdraw the Bill.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I have troubled your Lordships so often on this subject, in one form or another, that I shrank from rising at once in this debate; but lest silence should be in any way misinterpreted I ask permission to say a few words upon this Bill. The thanks of the House and of the country are due to any man who will endeavour to perform the most difficult task of pointing out modes in which we can give effect to what I am certain is the very widespread wish to restrict the growing mischief of Sunday work.

The noble Viscount has introduced a Bill which seems to me rather to assert a sound principle than to embody a really practical suggestion capable of enactment without difficulty. From beginning to end the Bill seems to me to require further consideration—omissions here, and additions there, which would practically change its character. Even the point as to the work of the clergy does not seem to me to be clearly dealt with in the Bill as it stands. And then there is the question how far the Bill would be operative with regard to the work of seamen on the high seas. The question of dairy farms and such work seems to be ignored in this Bill, though carefully provided for in the Continental Acts to which the noble Viscount referred. I could easily multiply examples of the difficulties which seem to me to arise the moment the details of the Bill are investigated. But I hope that will not be regarded as meaning, either on my own part or that of those for whom I should like to speak, that we are at all indifferent to this subject or feel that no action or legislation is desirable.

It is perfectly true that during the last ten years or so all over Europe and even beyond it, there has been rising up a genuine demand for legislation on this subject. In response to this demand Germany in 1892, Austria in 1895, Roumania in 1897, Denmark in 1904, Spain and Switzerland in 1905, France and Belgium in 1906, and Italy in 1907 all passed such legislation; and I am glad to hear from the noble Earl, who has just spoken on behalf of His Majesty's Government, that we may look forward with interest to a Return setting forth the effect of this legislation on the life of those countries. I have no doubt the noble Viscount will ask for this Return. If he does not, I shall be very glad to ask for it myself.

I have examined some of the foreign enactments on this subject with a good deal of care. I have in my hand the Bill passed last year in Italy, and if that measure is examined in detail it will be found that a few of the points to which exception is legitimately taken in respect of this Bill as it now stands have been carefully provided for. Its provisions are well worthy of careful consideration. Similar legislation is to be found also in Canada. All this furnishes abundant evidence of a general demand for some kind of restriction or guidance in this matter, and the practical possibility of getting it. I venture to hope that the noble Viscount will be satisfied with having obtained a further ventilation and discussion of the subject, that the Bill will reappear hereafter in some more workable form, and that the subject will go forward to a solution along lines which I believe are capable of being found, though not without difficulty or trouble.

*Lord HENEAGE, who had given notice on the Motion for the Second Reading, to move that the Bill be read 2ª this day six months, said: My Lords, I should like to join in the appeal which has been made to the noble Viscount to withdraw this Bill and not put the House to the trouble of a division. I placed my notice on the Paper to move the rejection of the Bill because I believe that in its present shape it is absolutely unworkable, and because I am one of those who believe that it is a dangerous thing to treat a Second Reading as though it were an abstract Resolution.

The noble Viscount was in error when he mentioned the number of persons who could do works of necessity on Sunday and who would not be affected by the Bill. It is those very persons who would be affected, whereas the large mass of the industrial labourers of the country, who work only six days in the week, would not be affected. If this Bill were passed the occupiers of small holdings would be able to milk their cows, feed their cattle, and do any necessary work on Sunday, while the shepherd and the cowman employed by any large farmer would be unable to do any work whatever. On those establishments no cow could be milked on Sunday, no horse watered, and no cattle tended. Then, again, it would be quite impossible for seamen and fishermen, who would come under the Bill, to comply with its provisions. Ships would have to stand still in mid-ocean on Sunday; no fires could be kept up, the cattle on board could not be tended, and the passengers would have to remain in bed for they could get no food. How under this Bill are dairies to be carried on? Cows must be milked unless they are to be ruined. Yet all dairymen and dairywomen would come under the Bill.

What is the object of the Bill? It is thus explained in the Memorandum.

> "The object of this Bill is to provide for each person who is working for an employer having the twenty-four hours of Sunday as a rest-day in each week, or when Sunday labour is necessary to have one Sunday of twenty-four hours uninterrupted in a fortnight, and a rest-day during the intervening period."

I think the noble Viscount will see that he is absolutely in error in saying that these exceptional cases of necessary labour will not come under the Bill. They are exactly the cases that will be included, whilst the mass of the labour of the country will not. I am told that everything is done on board ship that can be done so that there shall be as little work as possible on Sundays, and I am certain that it is much better to leave matters as they are in the hands of those who are desirous of keeping work at as low an ebb as possible on the Sunday. What, under this Bill, is to happen in the case of doctors and district nurses? They cannot move about unless they have people to take them. Yet according to this Bill no groom could harness a horse or accompany his master upon an urgent case. It is perfectly clear that neither curates nor

nor organists nor choirboys could perform their duties except on alternate Sundays. Even under the exemption clause, to which the noble Viscount referred, they could only perform their duties twice a month instead of four times a month.

Then the noble Viscount said the exemption clause was drawn so as to be carried out in the simplest way. I am afraid the noble Viscount's idea of simplicity and mine are very different. Under the Bill there are required a policeman, a magistrate's clerk, and a magistrate sitting in petty sessions before the exemption can be obtained in the statutory form on oath. How these separate stages are to be gone through on board ship if any one is taken ill, I cannot see. We all give the noble Viscount credit for the best intentions in this matter, but the Bill would not carry out his intentions; and I am certain it would be much better if he would take the advice which has been tendered to him and withdraw the Bill at the close of the discussion. In the hope that this course will be adopted, I will refrain from moving the rejection of the measure; but, if the noble Viscount does not withdraw it, my noble friend behind me, who represents the shipping interest more directly than I do, will be prepared to move its rejection.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I venture to hope that the noble Viscount who has introduced this Bill will defer to the appeal which has been made to him, and will be content with the discussion which has taken place without putting the House to the trouble of a division. We should be sorry to vote against the noble Lord, because we all recognise that his objects are excellent objects which commend themselves to us all. On the other hand, it is quite clear that we could not accept the measure in its present shape or in anything like its present shape. The noble Viscount himself has admitted, very frankly, that the Bill is by no means a perfect measure. In these circumstances, and as there is no prospect of the Bill becoming law this session, surely he will lose nothing by allowing the matter to stand over for the present. I think it is most important that before it comes up again we should be supplied with that information which I understand the Foreign Office is ready to give, as to the practice in foreign countries with regard to employment on Sundays. I say that for this reason in particular. Whenever we impose restrictions upon the employment of labour in this country, whenever we require more stringent hygienic conditions, or conditions more calculated to ensure the comfort and safety of those concerned, we are always told, and told, I think, with a good deal of force, that we are handicapping our own employers and workpeople in meeting foreign competition. Now, if it can be shown that in this case restrictions of the kind proposed in this Bill are already imposed in foreign countries, the force of that argument will be very much diminished. I hope, therefore, that my noble friend will not press his Motion, but will allow the matter to stand over for the present.

VISCOUNT HILL: My Lords, after the appeal which has been made to me I feel that I cannot do other than accept the suggestion of the noble Earl who spoke on behalf of His Majesty's Government. The discussion that has taken place this afternoon will undoubtedly be of great assistance to myself and those on whose behalf I have introduced the Bill; and, in withdrawing the Motion, I should like to accept the offer which the noble Earl made to me, and to ask the noble Lord who represents the Foreign Office in your Lordships' House if he will kindly give us a Return containing information with reference to the working of similar legislation in foreign countries.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

NEWS IN WAR TIME.

*LORD ELLENBOROUGH: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government if they intend to allow the session of 1908, as well as that of 1907, to slip away without bringing in a Bill dealing with dissemination of news in war time, and to ask the Lord Chancellor whether, as the subjects are akin, he will discuss this question also when conferring with members of the Press on the wording of the Official Secrets Bill.

In 1906 the late Prime Minister said that the subject of my Question would be dealt with early next session. Two years have elapsed, substantially the same Cabinet is in power, but no Bill has been laid before either House. The first duty that a citizen owes to the State is to keep a ring fence round it in proper repair, so that no strangers can break in and interfere either with his proceedings or those of his fellow-countrymen. With that fence secure he may discuss Licensing and Education Bills, make or unmake laws, or look on at cricket or football as much as he pleases. But the security of that fence should be his first thought, and gaps in it should be carefully mended before home politics or amusements are taken into consideration. That fence consists chiefly of the Navy, with a small Army to support it. The permission to print and disseminate news of the movements of ships and troops under all circumstances, constitutes one of the weak places in that fence—one which would probably become a gap the moment that any pressure was put upon it, and which might become the cause of irremediable disasters.

Naval officers are, I believe, unanimous in thinking that legislation is necessary. I regret to find, however, that that unanimity does not as yet extend to the gentlemen of the Press, and that although the more enlightened amongst them are in favour of legislation, yet as a body they have not been able to agree amongst themselves as to the wording of a Bill. In consequence of this, Parliament has unfortunately taken no steps to enforce the necessary secrecy, although the question has been before the country for three years, ever since Lord Selborne said in this House—

> "That the most patriotic journalist without a thought that he was doing his country any harm might in the day or two that precedes war publish news that might mar the whole issue of the naval campaign in this country."

I have on former occasions repeated to your Lordships the opinions of successful soldiers and sailors belonging to different countries, and I feel that I should only weary my audience and be fighting the air if I gave any further examples of the necessity of keeping secret the movements of ships and troops when hostilities are imminent.

I thought that this was an axiom universally admitted until I read a letter in *The Times* of 9th May, from which it seems that there are a number of journalists who hold a different opinion, and who also—

> "Consider that no good cause has been shown for suspecting the patriotism and discretion of those who conduct the newspapers of this country."

I do not for a moment question the patriotism of the vast majority of the journalists of the United Kingdom. I believe that their patriotism is as sound as my own. But I cannot forget that there is a small section of the Press that looks upon England's misfortune as Ireland's opportunity, and which would injure England if it could. As regards their discretion, only a small minority of journalists have studied naval and military matters sufficiently well to be able to know when indiscretion commences in time of war. I began to read the papers about fifty-five years ago, and I cannot recall to my mind any legislation of importance on which the Press were all agreed. If the introduction of a Bill is delayed until the Press is unanimous, we shall find ourselves unprepared if war is forced upon us. Even if successful we shall suffer more severely than necessary, both in men and in ships.

The chief object of a war is not to increase the sale of newspapers, and I tender my thanks to those journalists who appreciate this and who have endeavoured to influence public opinion in favour of legislation. I should myself be extremely sorry to see any attempt to interfere with criticism, as both services owe many improvements to discussions and suggestions that have appeared in newspapers. Preparation for war does not merely consist in voting taxes. Suitable legislation would increase our safety without costing the country one single penny. I think, therefore, that I am justified in appealing to the front benches in both Houses to lay aside party considerations for a

Lord Ellenborough.

few hours, for the purpose of assisting one another in passing a Bill dealing with news in war time. I look upon the Official Secrets Bill as holding much the same position towards a War News Bill as a published first volume does to a second volume that has not yet gone beyond the type-written stage. The arguments for and against both Bills are much the same. The chief difference between them is that the Official Secrets Bill is to be of a permanent character, whereas a War News Bill would lie dormant until war was looked upon as almost inevitable. I hope, therefore, that the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack, when exchanging views with gentlemen of the Press, will take the opportunity of handling both questions simultaneously, and that the Government will bring in a War News Bill as well as an Official Secrets Bill, either as one Bill or separately.

THE EARL OF GRANARD: My Lords, I think we are all agreed that this question is one of serious moment, because the effect of the dissemination of news in war time might be of a very lasting and permanent character if the movements of troops or ships were published prematurely. The Government during the last three or four years have been trying to arrive at some form of Bill of a more or less agreed type—a Bill that would meet the views of both front benches and also of a large section of the Press, and up to quite a short time ago the Admiralty had very strong hopes that they were within measurable distance of reaching that goal. A large section of the Press agreed, and, I think, still agree, that some legislation on this subject is necessary and negotiations were opened; but I am sorry to say that another section, after agreeing in the first instance to the original proposition, afterwards dissented, with the consequence that the Government have not been able to go on. I think that, from the Press point of view, their attitude is somewhat dangerous, for this reason, that in the event of war breaking out it might be necessary to pass a very drastic Bill at a moment's notice, and that would certainly affect the liberty of the Press much more strongly than a Bill passed in peace time.

Of course, there is another point to consider. At the present moment we have a great deal of legislation to get through, and it seems very doubtful whether the Government would be able to pass a Bill of this kind unless they were able to arrive at an absolutely agreed Bill. His Majesty's Government and the Admiralty certainly would be very pleased to see some such legislation as that suggested by my noble friend passed, and if they could arrive at some Bill which would be pleasing to all parties and would meet the views of the Admiralty I am sure they would do their best to further its passage.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, I do not suppose that, having regard to the great amount of legislation which is already before Parliament, the noble Lord will expect that we should be able during this session to proceed with the measures to which he has referred. For my part, I regret that we are unable to do so, but the fact is that our time is already too heavily mortgaged. With regard to the ultimate passing of a Bill of this kind, I confess I would very much prefer, for all reasons, that we should have a Bill to which general assent and acclamation were given.

I always dislike legislation passed in undue hurry. I remember when the Explosives Act was passed twenty or twenty-five years ago, it was passed in one day under the strong feeling that prevailed at that time against the prevalence of dynamiting in the country. I do not think that Bill was a bit better because it was passed in a hurry. On the contrary, I think it might have been improved if there had been time for consideration. Therefore, I would prefer that Parliament should be able to consider this matter deliberately and with plenty of leisure, and my view is that the Government should come to an agreement with noble Lords on the Opposition side of the House and with the Opposition in the House of Commons if we can. I should like also to be able to agree with the Press or any other section of opinion. It may be that we shall do so. I hope we shall; but if not, then I think Parliament will be entitled to take into its own hands the responsibility of dealing with this matter, and will not be bound to defer to what they might not think a wise resistance.

With regard to the Bill that has been referred to, I think that injury may be done to the country almost as much by the publication of matters which are not of a military or naval kind as by the publication of military and naval intelligence. I am certain we are all most anxious to preserve the most complete freedom in the right of criticism in this country. We are all the better for it; but I think it may be necessary to put limits upon the publication of matter, the publication of which is directly dangerous to the interests of the country at large. Whether it has reference to naval and military or other matters, I am certain we all desire to preserve the freedom of the Press and the freedom of publication as much as any of our predecessors. It is a great mistake to suppose that the subject is an easy one. There are a great many pitfalls. The anxiety of the Government is to deal with it, and if we are unable to do so this session it will not be lost sight of.

Earl CAWDOR: My Lords, I confess that I am somewhat disappointed by the story which the noble Earl opposite has given of the negotiations that have been going on. Two sessions ago there appeared to be considerable prospect of an agreed Bill, and last session the then First Lord of the Admiralty stated that it had been suggested that a Bill should be drafted and submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown for their approval and afterwards to a Committee of the Press. I gather, from what the noble Earl said, that something of the kind has been done, but that the result has not been satisfactory. I hope the matter will not be allowed to rest there. From what the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack has said it is clear that the Government recognise, as I am sure we all do on this side of the House, that this matter is far too grave to be left to any section of the people. I sincerely hope, however, that it may be possible to get a reasonable agreement with the Press. I can assure the noble and learned Lord that, so far as the Opposition in this House is concerned, we shall be most glad to try to concur with him in any measure he may think it necessary to bring forward. We also agree that legislation of this character should be carried deliberately and without undue haste, in quiet times and not under pressure of war. We have heard what the noble and learned Lord has said with great pleasure, and any assistance we can give will be given most ungrudgingly.

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 23rd June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

London United Tramways Bill (by Order).—As amended, considered; A Clause added; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

Audenshaw Urban District Council Bill [Lords] (by Order).—As amended, considered; Amendments made; Bill to be read the third time.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Amendment to Amendments to Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the rural districts of Limerick (No. 1) and Naas (No. 1), and the county of Westmeath and King's

County; and for other purposes." [Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the city of Dublin and the urban district of Pembroke (two)." [Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to sanction and confirm the existing water undertaking of the Urban District Council of Ammanford, in the county of Carmarthen; and for other purposes. [Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [Lords].

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitioners for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 276.]

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; Referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 277.]

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Willesden; and Hammersmith; to lie upon the Table.

CAOL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Swansea, against; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL

Petition from Edinburgh, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Tottenham; Edmonton; and Enfield; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition against: From Brechin; Forest of Dean; Monkton Farleigh and Upper Wraxall; Thornbury; and Wisbech; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Hammersmith, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Balham; Birmingham; Eastbourne; Eastney; Edinburgh; Fishguard; Grantown; Harpenden; Landport; Llanelly; Llwynhendy; Southsea; Tenby; and Tottenham; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Broughty Ferry; and Edzell; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

INTERMEDIATE EDUCATION (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Rules and Programme of Examinations for 1909 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4027 to 4030 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COUNTY OFFICERS AND COURTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1877.

Account presented, of the Receipts and Payments under the Act during the year ended 31st March, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 191.]

FINANCE ACCOUNTS.

Copy presented, of Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom for the year ended 31st March, 1908 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 192.]

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of First Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Board of Trustees for the National Galleries of Scotland for the period from 1st April, 1907 to 31st December, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. XXVI. (Glasgow, No. 7) (Regulations for Higher Degrees in Arts and Science) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 193.]

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance, No. XXVII. (Glasgow, No. 8) (Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 194.]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

Address for "Return of the names of every Member returned to serve in each Parliament from the dissolution of Parliament in the year 1900 to the present date, specifying the names of the county, city, University, or place for which returned (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 365, of Session 1901)."—(*Sir William Bull.*)

CONSTABULARY (IRELAND) [PAY, ETC.]

Committee to consider of making further provision for the Pay of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and for the Pensions, Pension Allowances, and Gratuities payable to them, their widows, and children (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow. (*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

CIVIL SERVICES, 1908–9 (SUPERANNUATION, AND RETIRED ALLOWANCES).

Paper [presented 22nd June] to be printed. [No. 190.]

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools in England (excluding Wales and Monmouthshire), with Schedules, by the Board of Education, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Return of Advances made under The Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of July, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Land Registration Fees.

MR. NIELD (Middlesex, Ealing): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether his attention has been called to the fact that registration fees at the Land Registry are payable, not on the price, but on the value of the land registered; whether he is aware that the officials of the Land Registry claim fees assessed on the value of the land, not at the date of the dealing therewith, but upon a supposed value at the time of the registration of such dealing, whereby a builder who has contracted to buy plots of land and erect houses thereon, and subsequently takes a conveyance of the land under such contract, is compelled to pay 6s. per cent. on the price of the land and also on the cost of the houses he has himself erected and which form no part of the consideration or value referred to in the contract in pursuance of which the conveyance is made; and whether he will communicate with the Lord Chancellor under these circumstances, with a view to such an alteration of the Land Transfer Fee Order as will obviate the hardship complained of.

(*Answered by Sir W. Robson.*) The contracts referred to are of a rather special nature, and may be looked at from various points of view. The existing practice is in accordance with the rules, and with the insurance principles which underlie them. But as the amount involved is small the Lord Chancellor will consider whether the concession suggested may not be made.

Thames Conservancy Board—Representation of Anglers.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): To ask the President of the Board of

Trade if he has received from the Anglers' Association of London a petition praying that a more popularly-constituted Board of Conservators than that proposed or now existing be constituted, and that the Anglers' Association be enabled to elect or nominate one or more of such conservators, also that the Board of Trade should be empowered to create a commission to inquire into and decide on questions of private fisheries, and that the public right to use the towpath and have access to the river be declared in the Port of London Bill; also praying that the conservators may have power to preserve the River Thames as a place of public recreation, to look after the backwaters and side streams, and preserve public rights.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I have received a copy of the petition addressed by the Anglers' Association to the Joint Committee of Parliament which is now considering the Port of London Bill. I am considering the question whether it is possible to give some representation on the Board of Conservators to those who are interested in the preservation of fish and the amenities of the river. The other matters mentioned in the Question are not such as can conveniently be dealt with by the present Bill.

Competition between Convict and Free Labour in Construction of Borstal Prison.

Mr. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether convict labour is competing with, and to some extent displacing, free labour in the construction of the new prison at Borstal; and, if so, whether he will take any steps to remedy this state of things.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) No, Sir. There is no such competition or displacement. One new wing of the prison will be built entirely by outside labour. On the others, one of which is now being commenced, the labour of the inmates will be utilised as far as possible. It is the traditional and accepted policy of the Department to utilise prison labour for building purposes whenever it is practicable to do so. To deprive prisoners of this work would be to take away from them the opportunity of useful employment and trade instruction, which, in accordance with the prison rules, must be provided for them as far as possible. This rule applies with special force to Borstal, where young prisoners are sent expressly for such practical training. The special treatment known as the "Borstal System" would not exist at all if such training could not be given.

Removal of Human Remains from Prince's Square Burial Ground.

Mr. W. BENN (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has granted a conditional licence for the removal of the human remains in the Swedish Lutheran Church, Prince's Square, East; on what conditions the licence has been granted; whether Prince's Square can now be built over; and whether he is aware that a desire exists locally that this land situated in a densely populated district may be preserved as an open space.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) My predecessor granted in 1905 a licence "for the removal of the human remains now interred in the churchyard and in the underground vault of the Swedish Church, Prince's Square, St. George's in the East." This licence was not acted on and expired. In May last, on application by the Swedish Consul General, I granted a fresh licence in its place. The licence is subject to the usual conditions as to decency, sanitary precautions, and proper reinterment of the human remains. The licence has no reference to, or effect upon, the statutory restrictions on the use of the land in question for building purposes. That matter is governed by the law relating to disused burial grounds, in regard to which I have no powers or duties.

Punishment for Homicide in America.

Mr. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Return of 19th August, 1907, on the various punishments for homicidal crime in foreign countries, No. 316, is very incomplete with regard to the

United States of America, and especially as to the States of Maine, Wisconsin, and Michigan; and whether he will cause the said Return to be supplemented with regard to these States.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) In the Return in question it has not been attempted to give a complete collection of the laws on homicidal crime which are in force in all the States of the union. Five States, selected as typical by His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, have been treated fully, and a summary has been given of the law of a number of others. But short particulars, corresponding to those given on pages 25–27 of the Return, as to the three States which my hon. friend mentions, and as to any others which he may select, shall be obtained and given to him if he will inform me that he so desires.

Applications from Surveyors for Head Postmasterships.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if surveyors in England send their lists with regard to applications for head postmasterships or other superior appointments to the Postmaster-General direct, while the Irish surveyors forward their list to the secretary in Dublin; and if the expression "headquarters," where all such applications are sent, means London or the head-quarters of each surveyor.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) All applications for head postmasterships or sub-postmasterships, from whatever part of the United Kingdom, are forwarded to the secretary and submitted by him to the Postmaster-General. Applications from Ireland are transmitted by the surveyor in the first instance to the secretary in Dublin, and forwarded by him to the secretary with his recommendations. There are but few other superior appointments for which applications are invited, but it may be stated broadly that the practice is the same.

Staff at Osborne and Dartmouth Naval Colleges.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty the numbers borne for educational and disciplinary work, respectively, at Osborne and Dartmouth Royal Naval Colleges so as to include all attached craft in the following classes of officials, viz., civilian instructors, including naval instructors and chaplains employed in instructional work, naval officers, warrant officers, and petty officers, the figures to include all attached craft; and, in the event of his not being able to distinguish between educational and disciplinary work or to indicate by notes when officers credited to the disciplinary side are also employed in an educational capacity, to ask for the total numbers in each class attached to the colleges.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) As I have already stated in reply to a previous Question, it is not possible to make the suggested distinction between educational and other work. The numbers in each class are—

	Osborne.	Dartmouth.
Civilian instructors, etc. - - -	36	31
Naval officers (including one marine officer) - - -	17	15
Warrant officers -	2	2
Petty officers - -	47	43

Sentence on William Perdue, of Bedford.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of William Perdue, aged eighteen, who was sentenced at the Bedford borough petty sessions to two months imprisonment with hard labour for an assault, although the town clerk, who appeared for the prosecution, only wished that he might be bound over as the defendant was helping to support the family, his father being out of work; and whether he can see his way, under the circumstances, to revise the sentence.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have made careful inquiry into this case; but, having regard to all the circumstances, I regret that I do not feel able to advise any reduction of the sentence.

Securities and Money in the Court of Chancery.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the total accumulations in the Suitors Fund and other funds in the Court of Chancery; the amount which is unclaimed; the cause of the accumulation; the amounts paid out and for what purpose; and what steps have been taken to make public the names of the individuals whose funds are derelict in order that their heirs may claim it.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The nominal value of the securities and money in Court on 31st May, 1908, was as follows—

	£	s.	d.
Stock - - -	47,509,050	9	8
Money on deposit -	1,138,507	9	2
Cash - - - -	1,416,305	1	1
Total -	£50,063,862	19	11

The amount of funds in Court on 1st September, 1907, which had not been dealt with, other than by accumulation of dividends, was £1,110,579 13s. 5d., distributed over 3,400 separate accounts, one-half of which do not exceed £150 in value, and only about one-twentieth exceed £1,000. This amount cannot be described as wholly unclaimed, as it includes many sums of which the ultimate destination is known, but which are retained in Court for various purposes. Funds in the Chancery Division represent the major part of these balances, but funds in lunacy and in the King's Bench, and Probate and Admiralty Divisions are also represented. The cause of the accumulation cannot be shortly stated, but in general it may be said to arise from the fact that the Court was not aware at the time when the funds were directed to be accumulated of the name of the persons to whom they might ultimately belong. Many funds have been lodged by trustees under the Trustee Relief Acts, and accumulate until the Court is asked to decide upon the ownership. Amounts are frequently paid out under orders of the Court to individual claimants. In the three years preceding the publication of the last list, upwards of 200 funds, amounting to about £100,000, were so distributed. There is published triennially, under Statute (35 and 36 Vict., cap. 44, Section 18, Sub-section 9) and Supreme Court Funds Rules, 1905, Rule 101, a "list or statement of the accounts in the books of the Pay Office to the credit of which there stood on 1st September then next preceding any funds not less than £50, which have not been dealt with, otherwise than by the continuous investment or placing on deposits of dividends, during the fifteen years immediately preceding the last-mentioned date. The said list or statement shall be filed in the Central Office, and a copy thereof shall be inserted in the *London Gazette*, and exhibited in the several offices of the court." It is impossible in most cases to state the names of the individuals whose funds are "derelict," but information is readily given to *bona-fide* inquirers as to the circumstances (when known) under which the funds have been directed, or allowed, to remain in Court, and the authorities quoted in the "Dormant Fund List" enable applicants to search the original records, and present their claims to the Court.

Unclaimed Government Stock and Dividends.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the total sum which accrued within the last 100 years from unclaimed Government stock and dividends, at what figure the amount now stands, and what are the chief objects for which the amount has been drawn upon.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The Acts regulating the transfer of unclaimed stock and of unclaimed dividends to the National Debt Commissioners are:—56 Geo. III., cap. 60; 8 and 9 Vict., cap. 62, and Part VII. of The National Debt Act, 1870, 33 and 34 Vict., cap. 71. The total amount of unclaimed stock transferred to the National Debt Commissioners to 31st March, 1908 was £4,384,981; of which there had been retransferred to claimants at that date £3,447,741; leaving still unclaimed £937,240. The total amount of the unclaimed dividends to 31st March, 1908, was 3,725,056; of which there had been reclaimed at that date £1,918,525; leaving still unclaimed £1,806,531. The unclaimed dividend account has been twice drawn upon: (*a*) In 1866 stock to the credit of the unclaimed dividends account to the amount of £3,000,000 was cancelled, but the amount required to meet the full liability of the account was subsequently made good out of the interest earned by the investment of the unclaimed moneys; (*b*) In 1904 £1,000,000 cash was paid into the Exchequer from the unclaimed dividend account under Section 10 of The Finance Act, 1904. At 31st March, 1908, the deficiency on the assets of the fund arising from this transaction had been reduced to £867,831.

Trial of Mr. Bethell at Seoul.

CAPTAIN KINCAID-SMITH (Warwickshire, Stratford-on-Avon): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information of the reported trial of Mr. Bethell at Seoul; what are the charges; and what is the composition of the Court.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) I have nothing to add to the statement I made yesterday in reply to a Question by the hon. Member for Stirlingshire.

Reduction of International Garrison in Crete.

COLONEL R. WILLIAMS (Dorsetshire, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is contemplated to withdraw the international troops from Crete within twelve months or two years.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) A reduction in the numbers of the international troops will be made during the course of the summer, and it is contemplated that unless anything should occur to prevent it, the withdrawal should be completed within one year from the date of the departure of the first contingent.

Removal of Letter-box from Droitwich Railway Station.

MR. C. B. HARMSWORTH (Worcestershire, Droitwich): To ask the Postmaster-General why the letter-box has been removed from the railway station at Droitwich; and whether, having regard to the convenience of local residents and others, he will consider the possibility of causing the letter-box to be reinstated.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The letter-box in question was removed from its old position near the railway station at Droitwich to a fresh site about 125 yards distant, upon the recent closing of the Ombersley Street Post Office, as the altered position was considered to be more central for the requirements of the locality generally. It is thought desirable, however, to erect an additional box on the railway station premises, and I am in communication with the railway company on the subject.

Suez Canal Shares.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state what is the total number of the shares of the Suez Canal Company; what is the number of those shares possessed by His Majesty's Government; what is their face value, and what was the amount paid for them; what is the voting power attached to His Majesty's Government's holding; what amounts were received in each of the years 1905, 1906, and 1907 in respect of these shares, and what was the rate of dividend on the face value of the shares; and whether the hopes of the British Suez Canal directors, expressed in 1906, that a method of adjusting the partition of the surplus revenue more acceptable to the clients of the company might eventually be arrived at, are likely to be realised at an early date.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The capital originally consisted of 400,000 shares of 500 francs each; 176,602 shares were purchased by His Majesty's Government at a cost of £3,976,582; of which 7,179 have since been redeemed. Shareholders enjoy one vote for every twenty-five shares, up to a maximum of ten. The voting power in respect of the British Government holding is limited to ten votes. The amounts received in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, representing interest and dividend on the shares, and dividend on the Actions de Jouissance, which replaces the drawn shares, were francs 26,502,419·68, francs 26,569,947·46, francs 26,623,790·38 respectively. The rate of interest on the shares is a fixed rate of 5 per cent. per annum; the dividends distributed on the shares and Actions de Jouissance in the three years were at the following rates for each 500 francs: in 1905, francs 125,894; in 1906, francs 126,333; in 1907, francs 126,695. With regard to the opinion expressed by the official directors in 1906, I would point out that the toll was reduced in that year by 75 centimes to 7 francs 75 centimes per ton, and since then considerable sums have been expended on the improvement of the canal.

Government Experimental Cultivation of Crops.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture will consider the advisability of setting apart some portion of the Crown lands for the purpose of conducting experiments as to the cultivation of crops and the remedies for disease both in cereal and root crops.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The Board have no power to set apart Crown lands for the purpose mentioned. Experimental areas of the nature suggested are more conveniently associated with the various agricultural colleges, to many of which the Board make annual grants.

Prevention of Abortion in Cattle and Sheep.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether any recent investigation has been made by the Board into the causes of and the prevention of abortion in cattle and sheep; and, if so, whether the Board will issue a circular to agriculturists giving the result of their researches.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) A Departmental Committee, of which Sir John MacFadyean is the chairman, have been engaged during the past three years on an experimental investigation into the pathology and etiology of epizootic abortion. Their Report will probably be made in the autumn, and we shall then consider the best way of bringing their conclusions to the notice of agriculturists.

Prevention of Disease in Root Crops.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether any recent experiments have been conducted by the Board as to the causes of and the prevention of the disease of finger-and-toe in root crops; and, if so, whether the Board will publish the results for the information of agriculturists.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) No experiments in connection with finger-and-toe disease have been made by the Board, but some have recently been conducted by the Armstrong College at Newcastle and by the local authority for Cornwall. The results of these experiments tend to confirm the information and advice given in the Board's leaflet on the subject, copies of which I shall be pleased to send to the right hon. Member.

Scientific Investigation of Sea Fisheries.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Lancashire and Western Sea Fisheries Joint Committee receive any grants from the Government for fishery research and administrative work; if not, whether, in view of the fact that nearly the whole of the cost in connection with both research and administrative work in Scotland and on the East Coast is paid for from national funds, he will give effect to the repeated promises given to the local sea fisheries committees that their claims to participate in the grants made for this purpose would be considered; and whether, seeing that this joint committee spends yearly a considerable sum on fishery research, he will make it a grant from the moneys voted for that purpose.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. A Committee, which was appointed by the Treasury last year, is now considering what scientific and statistical investigations are required in the interests of the fishing industry, and by what agencies they can be most usefully and economically carried on. Until the Report of that Committee is received it is not possible for the Board to make a grant to any particular committee.

Universities Charters.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education which of the Universities in the United Kingdom are at present constituted under charter, which under Act of Parliament, and which partly under charter and partly under Act of Parliament.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*)

Constitution of Universities in the United Kingdom.

University.	Date of grant of Charter.	Act of Parliament.
Oxford	1248 1355 1510 1570	13 Eliz., c. 29 (Confirmation of Charters)
Cambridge	1231 1571	Ditto.
London	—	University of London Act, 1898 (61 and 62 Vict., c. 62)
Durham	1831	2 and 3 Will. 4, c. 19
Birmingham	1900	
Manchester (Victoria University)	1880 1903 (reconstituted)	
Liverpool.	1903	
Leeds	1904	
Sheffield	1905	
Wales	1893	
St. Andrews	1411	Confirmed by Act of Union (6 Anne, c. 11), Article XXV.
Glasgow	1451	
Aberdeen.	1494	
Edinburgh	1582	
Dublin	1591	
Royal University of Ireland .	1880	42 and 43 Vict., c. 65

Customs Duties on Tea, Coffee, Figs, etc.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the total amounts obtained during the last financial year from the Customs duties on tea, cocoa, coffee, chicory, currants, figs and fig-cake, plums (of the various dutiable kinds), prunes, and raisins, respectively.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Statement of the total amounts obtained from the Customs duties on the under-mentioned articles in the financial year, 1907–8—

Articles.	Net receipt of duty. £.
Tea	5,807,947
Cocoa	286 918
Coffee	183.624
Chicory	47,510
Currants	126,139
Figs and fig-cake	60,999
Plums, French, and dried or preserved	35,736
Prunes	9,796
Raisins	223,822

Distribution of Board of Agriculture Leaflets.

MR. MONTAGU (Cambridgeshire, Chesterton): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what steps are taken by the Board, when it publishes leaflets giving information as to the diagnosis, cure, and prevention of diseases of animals and plants, to distribute the leaflets among the farmers and others interested in the localities affected or likely to be affected.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Those of our leaflets which deal with certain diseases of animals and plants, such as swine fever, sheep scab, gooseberry mildew, black scab of potatoes, etc., are distributed by the various local authorities to all persons to whom they may be of interest, and all are issued to the Press, to our agricultural correspondents, and to some 12,000 persons whose names are recorded in our books who help to make them known. We issue special notices calling attention to any particular leaflet where the circumstances suggest that it is likely to be specially useful. Information as to the distribution of our leaflets is always given in the Annual Report of our Intelligence Division which is presented to Parliament.

3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended that the 3rd battalion Coldstream Guards shall leave Cairo for other quarters in Egypt or the Sudan during the present year.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) No official information of any such intended move has reached the War Office. The internal reliefs within the command are a matter of local arrangement.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Atlantic Fleet.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will state what is the nominal composition of the Atlantic Fleet at the present time, and what is the actual composition in battleships, armoured cruisers, and protected cruisers; and whether he adheres to the Admiralty Memorandum of 1905, that not more than one large vessel of a fleet is to be under repair in dockyard at the same time, so as to ensure the fleets being kept up to their effective strength and ready for instant service.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The composition of the Atlantic Fleet at the present time, is:—six battleships, two attached cruisers, and the second cruiser squadron of four armoured cruisers. Of the battleships, three have been in hand in the dockyards, concurrently during the present month. The Admiralty arranges that the annual repairs of the six battleships should as a rule take place consecutively, but has no intention of limiting its discretion when circumstances appear to it fully to justify, as in this instance, a deviation from the usual practice.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Has the Memorandum of 1905 been abandoned, or is it now more honoured in the breach than in the observance?

Mr. McKENNA: The hon. Gentleman must make neither supposition.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: But is it being observed in this case?

Mr. McKENNA: No, but there are cases in which while an exception is made a rule still stands good. This is one.

Captain FABER: Why is it not observed in this case?

Mr. McKENNA: In order that we may have the Fleet complete for the visit to Quebec, and that no ship shall be under repair at that time.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): Is it not repeatedly the case that, not only in the Atlantic, but in other Fleets, this Memorandum is not observed, and would it not be advisable to withdraw it, as it cannot be observed?

Mr. McKENNA: If my hon. friend attaches any meaning to the word "repeatedly" he is mistaken.

Rosyth

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, seeing that the necessity of a naval dockyard at Rosyth is apparent when it is remembered that there is no Government dockyard capable of taking in ships of the "Dreadnought" class along the whole of the East Coast of Great Britain, he can state that the work is now being proceeded with with the utmost expedition that he can command; why the contracts that his predecessor intended to issue this June have been delayed for another six months; and when his advisers estimate that these works will be fit for use by His Majesty's ships of war.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty how many years it is contemplated will elapse before the new royal dockyard at Rosyth is completed.

Mr. McKENNA: I hope that tenders will be invited for the main contract in October next. Any delay in the placing of the contract has been due to the fact that a longer time than was anticipated has been required for the preparation of the contract particulars. The contract for the main work will probably be completed in seven years from January next.

Mr. ASHLEY: Is such a slow rate of construction justified in view of the urgency of the case?

Mr. McKENNA: The Admiralty are satisfied that, if it is completed within seven years, it will be sufficient.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the Admiralty consider the advisability of employing officers on overtime in drawing up the specifications?

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): Will the £40,000 voted this year be spent in the twelve months at Rosyth?

Mr. McKENNA: I must ask for notice of that.

Unclaimed Soldiers' Pay.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the total value of unclaimed pay and other effects held by the War Office; and what steps are taken to find the heirs of the persons to whom the property belonged.

The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. Haldane, Haddington): The total amount now in the hands of the War Office is £18,546 18s. 7d. Besides this, stock representing the sum of £136,837 6s. 11d. has been handed over to the Royal Corporation of the Patriotic Fund; this does not bar the claim of any person thereto. Lists of estates in which no distribution has been made are published periodically in the *London Gazette* and are republished with corrections for six successive years. The lists may also be seen at the depots, and short notices relating to them are published monthly in seven newspapers.

5th Royal Lancers.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has caused inquiry to be made into the reasons why five officers of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers were recently placed on half-pay; and, if so will he state the result of such investigation.

Mr. HALDANE: Full inquiry was made into these cases and the Army Council considered that the retention of these officers on the strength of the regiment would be prejudicial to the efficiency and well-being of the unit.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether Captain Bryce Wilson, late of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, and one of the five officers recently placed on half-pay, has charged his commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Graham, with presenting a confidential Report to the Army Council which was untrue; whether Captain Bryce Wilson charges Lieutenant-Colonel Graham with having him removed from the 5th Lancers for personal means; and whether any steps are being, or will be, taken fully to investigate these charges.

Mr. HALDANE: Captain Bryce Wilson denied that the statements made by his Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Graham were true and accused him of personal bias. A full investigation of the facts, together with the opinions of the General Officers under whose command the 5th Lancers were serving, indicate that Lieutenant-Colonel Graham recorded his unbiassed opinion of Captain Bryce Wilson and was actuated by no personal animus. The Army Council are satisfied that the opinion expressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Graham, that the retention of Captain Bryce Wilson in the 5th Lancers was undesirable, was a correct view of the case. It is not considered necessary or advisable to make any further investigation into the matter.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in March, 1904, the A. squadron of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, mutinied while stationed at Colchester; whether the squadron saddled up, mounted their horses, and rode out of barracks, remaining away from early morning till late in the afternoon, and repeated this conduct on the following day; whether Major, now Lieutenant-Colonel Graham, commanding the 5th Lancers, was then in command of A. squadron, and in the absence of the commanding officer was for the time being also in command of the regiment; whether Lieutenant-Colonel Graham condoned this mutiny; and whether he is aware that Captain Bryce Wilson subsequently took command of A. squadron, and that under the command of this officer it became a contented and efficient squadron.

Mr. HALDANE: As I have already informed the House no report of this alleged mutiny has ever reached the War Office.

Mr. GEORGE ROBERTS: Will inquiry be made?

Mr. HALDANE: There is no necessity. We should have known if a mutiny had occurred.

New Indian Press Law.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is in a position to give an assurance that the provisions of the Indian Press Act VII. of 1908, which empower a magistrate, if he is of opinion that a newspaper contains any incitement to any act of violence, to confiscate the Press, will be applied impartially to Anglo-Indian as well as to Indian newspapers.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Before the Question is answered, I desire to ask if it is in order to suggest that the Viceroy and the Government of India will not be impartial in carrying out the law.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): And is it in order, under cover of a Question, to impute to the Government of India and its servants racial prejudice and injustice?

*MR. SPEAKER: A Government is always fair game.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The Act, as the hon. Member is aware, draws no distinction between Anglo-Indian and Indian newspapers, and the Secretary of State has no doubt that it will be impartially administered.

SIR H. COTTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman not aware that flagrant instances have recently occurred in which Anglo-Indian newspapers have incited to acts of violence?

MR. BUCHANAN: I am not aware of that, but I am perfectly certain that the Act will be impartially administered.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us why he is perfectly certain that the Government will be impartial? No party in this House ever admits the impartiality of the Government in power.

*MR. REES: Is there any analogy between a Government in office here and the permanent Government in India?

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): The permanent Government is a lot worse.

MR. BUCHANAN: My experience, which, I believe, is that of other Members of this House, is that the Government of India endeavours, and has in the main succeeded, in holding the balance impartially in these matters.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the provisions of the Indian Press Act VII. of 1908, empowering a magistrate, if he is of opinion that a newspaper contains any incitement to any act of violence to confiscate the press, would authorise the confiscation of the press of a newspaper which advocated in its columns the return of a blow for a blow or action resulting in violence, such, for instance, as the holding of a meeting which is broken up and accompanied by acts of violence; and whether, having regard to the vagueness of the language used, he will consider the advisability of laying down instructions which shall regulate the application of the law and so prevent the abuse of its provisions.

MR. BUCHANAN: The question as to the interpretation of the Indian Press Act in a hypothetical case which the hon. Member puts is a question of law, on which the Secretary of State cannot give an opinion. He does not, as at present advised, see any reason for laying down instructions of the kind suggested by the hon. Member.

*MR. REES: Is not the complete immunity of the judiciary from all interference by the Executive one of the chief planks in the Congress platform?

MR. BUCHANAN: I am unable to say.

SIR H. COTTON: Having regard to the extremely general terms in which the Act is framed as regards incitement, will the Government not consider it necessary to watch very closely the operation of the law?

MR. BUCHANAN: The Secretary of State has given instructions that all steps taken under the Act shall be reported to him from time to time.

Indian Bomb Outrage.

*MR. REES: Can the Under-Secretary of State for India give the House any further information as to the outrage last Sunday on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, the victims of which were two Europeans?

MR. BUCHANAN: We have no information beyond that which has appeared in the newspapers.

South African Constabulary.

*CAPTAIN FABER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the total number of police dismissed from the South African Constabulary during the last ten months is about 1,200; and, if so, whether they have been replaced by Dutchmen.

I beg also to ask the Uner-Secretary of State for the Colonies whther Colonel

Curtis and O'Brien, both of them with eight years record in the police, have been dismissed from the South African Constabulary and been succeeded by Mr. Papenfus; if so, will he state what experience of police the latter has had, and what is his nationality; and what reason is given for the dismissal of Colonels Curtis and O'Brien.

The following were among the unstarred Questions:

CAPTAIN FABER: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Mr. Keighly, the Inspector of the Police Depot, South African Constabulary, has been dismissed, and for what reason; and whether Mr. Odendaal, who is reported to have succeeded him, was a former corporal of the Republican Staats Artillerie.

CAPTAIN FABER: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Mr. Bredell, who was a dependant of the late President Kruger, has been appointed secretary of the Amalgamated South African Constabulary, to the exclusion of the clerical staff of either force.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer all the hon. and gallant Member's Questions for to-day on recent appointments or dismissals in the Transvaal at the same time. The Secretary of State is not furnished with regular or complete information on these subjects, which since responsible Government was granted to the Transvaal lie within the power of the Colonial Ministry, whose decisions the Secretary of State has no power to overrule. In any case in which Ministers' action appears to be open to question it will, no doubt, be discussed in the Transvaal Parliament to which they are responsible. I may, however, say generally that the numbers of the South African Constabulary have been very largely reduced owing to the necessity, which the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Governments felt was imposed upon them by circumstances, of carrying out a policy of retrenchment with respect to their police forces. Large retrenchment had previously been found necessary under Crown Colony Government. The suggestion in the first Question for oral reply of the hon. Member that those whose services have been dispensed with have been to a large extent and in a wholesale manner replaced by Dutchmen is not in accordance with fact.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Is there any reason in the wide world why Dutchmen should not be in the police force?

COLONEL SEELY: I suppose there is no reason why Dutchmen should not be in the police force, but in point of fact there are very few.

CAPTAIN FABER: Why have so many British policemen been got rid of?

COLONEL SEELY: It is not the fact that the Englishmen have been dismissed to make place for Dutchmen. With regard to the numbers dismissed, the South African Constabulary has come to an end, because the Transvaal and Orange River Colony Governments have considered it better to have one police force for each country. As the Transvaal Government have decided that 2,000 men is a sufficient force for that country, great reductions must of course be made.

Ceylon.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether rules have been published by the Ceylon Government laying down the eligibility of Ceylonese for employment as district engineers in the Public Works Department; whether he is aware that the present Director of Public Works in Ceylon is endeavouring to secure the employment of Englishmen to the exclusion of Ceylonese by interfering with the selection of candidates in this country; and whether he will take steps to ensure that Ceylonese who have qualified in pursuance of the regulations shall be accorded a preference, or at least equal treatment when candidates are selected.

COLONEL SEELY: The Ceylon Technical College Regulations lay down the minimum course of training which Ceylonese engineering students in this country must undergo before they can be considered for ordinary vacancies in the Second Grade of the District Engineers of the Ceylon Public Works Department. No undertaking is, however, given them that on the completion of such a course they will receive appointments, and, in fact, of late years the Ceylon Government in stating the qualifications required when vacancies had to be filled, have usually asked for men with longer experience of their profession than the minimum period mentioned in the Technical College Regulations. It is the policy of the Ceylon Government and of successive Secretaries of State to pay every consideration to the claims of well qualified Ceylonese to appointments in the Public Works Department of Ceylon, and to give them a certain preference over Europeans with equal qualifications; but where the qualifications are not equal the best man must of course be appointed. I am not aware that there is any justification for the suggestion contained in the second part of my hon. friend's Question.

*MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): But why should preference be given to the Singhalese?

COLONEL SEELY: They happen to be on the spot and successive Secretaries of State have thought it only just.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): Is it not the fact that Major Skinner has the highest opinion of the Ceylonese both in regard to ability and character.

COLONEL SEELY: I have no knowledge of Major Skinner's opinion, but no doubt it is correct.

Osman Digna.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that Osman Digna, at the beginning of his incarceration, was kept in solitary confinement and in chains, and that after such confinement his mental state was such that, though permitted to have intercourse with his fellow prisoners, he lay speechless in bed for about twenty months; what is his age; how long has he been in prison; on what grounds and by whose orders was he subjected to the above treatment; whether he has been medically examined recently to discover if he is suffering from religious mania; and whether the Government will now appoint independent medical experts to examine him and report and recommend as to his future treatment.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): With regard to the first, second, and fifth points of the hon. Member's Question, I have received no information which leads me to believe that the facts are as stated. They relate to some years ago, and I do not know Osman Digna's age. With regard to the fourth point, Osman Digna was transferred from Suakin to the prison at Rosetta in January, 1900, and has since remained in confinement for reasons which have already been fully explained in the replies which I returned to Questions asked by the hon. Member for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland on 7th May, and in the letter which I caused to be addressed to the hon. Gentleman himself on 15th April. With regard to the sixth and seventh points, I beg to refer the hon. Gentleman to my Answer of 7th May above referred to, and I may add that I have complete confidence that the Egyptian Government will take all steps that may be necessary in the interests of the prisoner's health.

Egyptian Provincial Councils.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Egyptian Government has informed the Commission appointed by the Legislative Council to examine the new project of provincial councils that it will admit no substantial modification of the scheme; whether the Commission has consequently decided that it is useless to discuss the matter with the Government's representative; and whether he will advise the Egyptian Government to take steps to elicit and consider native opinion on the subject before proceeding with the scheme.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have had no information which corroborates the statements in the hon. Member's Question; on the contrary I understand that the matter is still occupying the attention of the Egyptian Government with the view of promoting agreement.

Egyptian Police.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the number of police in Egypt, their distribution, and the usual hours of coming on and going off duty; and whether, in view of the still high proportion of crime in Egypt, he will advise the Egyptian Government to introduce a comprehensive reform of the police system, including the substitution, as rapidly as possible, of an adequate number of properly paid police, working an adequate number of hours, for the ghaffiers or night watchmen.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I cannot give the details asked for in the question with regard to the police. But measures to secure the better repression of crime in Egypt have, I understand, lately been occupying the attention of the Egyptian Government, and I hope will result in increasing the effective co-operation of the parquet and the police for this purpose.

Cairo Tramways.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Egyptian Government has recently extended the concession to the Cairo Tramways Company by a further period of twenty-seven years, and whether he can state for how many years the concession is now to run.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have no information on the subject, but will make inquiry.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is the object of continuing the concession to retard as far as possible the extension of the municipality of Cairo? Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire as to that?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I cannot inquire as to the motive, but I will do as to facts.

Macedonia.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now give any information as to the progress of the negotiations between the British and Russian Governments on the subject of Macedonian reforms.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer I returned to the hon. Member for Ripon yesterday.

Stornoway Fishermen's Petition.

Mr. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received a Resolution passed at a meeting of fish-curers, fishermen, and others held at Stornoway on 30th May, urging that His Majesty's Government should endeavour to effect an international agreement under which in-shore waters, spawning banks, and other suitable areas for breeding purposes should be closed against beam and otter trawling; and will he state what action he proposes to take in the matter?

Sir EDWARD GREY: Yes, Sir; the Resolution was forwarded to me by the Provost of Stornoway on the 13th instant. I must await the consideration of the matter by the Offices primarily concerned, which is now proceeding.

Mr. WEIR: When may we hope to know the result?

Sir EDWARD GREY: That depends on the Offices concerned.

Morocco.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, with a view to legalise the position of Mulai Hafid, the actual ruler of Morocco, he is now prepared to approach the other Powers signatories of the Algeciras Convention in order to obtain his recognition as Sultan of that country.

Sir EDWARD GREY: No useful purpose could be served by His Majesty's Government taking an initiative such as is suggested. The situation in Morocco, with special reference to the point raised in the Question, was fully dealt with by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the French Chamber, and I can at present add nothing to what was then stated, which is reported in *The Times* of last Saturday.

Peace Conference Protocols.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that an expensive Blue-book, entitled Protocols of the Eleven Plenary Meetings of the Second Peace Conference, has been issued, of which only the title and table of contents are in the English language; and whether he intends to adhere to this practice of issuing to the public Reports of considerable national interest in a foreign tongue.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The Protocols of the Plenary Meetings of the Second Peace Conference have been issued in French, following the precedent of the First Peace Conference of 1899. The Table of Contents includes a very full summary of the proceedings of each Plenary Meeting, and to furnish a complete translation of each Protocol would have involved considerable labour and delay in the issue of the Blue-book; it was not done on previous occasions, and would require an addition to the staff of the Foreign Office. The actual Conventions, which are the really important documents, have already been translated and published, and that is the general practice.

Mr. BELLAIRS: What is the position of a member of the public who, on the strength of the English title buys this expensive Blue-book? Is he to keep it, or can he get his money back?

Sir EDWARD GREY: The general practice is to translate the really important documents.

Mecca Pilgrims.

Dr. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what was the composition of the Commission appointed to inquire into the conduct of those responsible for the safety of Mahmal during the recent pilgrimage to Mecca; whether any military men were upon it; and whether he will appoint a further Commission of competent military authorities to report how many troops and arms are necessary for the adequate protection of Mahmal on the forthcoming pilgrimage.

Sir EDWARD GREY: I have no information as to the Commission referred to by the hon. Member. The matter is one for the discretion of the Egyptian Government, of whose desire to give adequate protection as far as lies in their power there is no doubt whatever.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is it not the duty of the Government to guarantee the safety of these pilgrims?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I am sure the Egyptian Government is anxious to do all in its power to secure that.

International Opium Commission.

Mr. THEODORE TAYLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can now inform the House what are the terms of reference of the International Opium Commission; and when and where will it first meet.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The United States Government have communicated to us and to the other Governments concerned suggestions as to the terms of reference and as to the date and place of meeting. These suggestions are now under consideration and, until an agreement has been arrived at, I can make no statement on the subject. I am at present in communication with the India Office and the Colonial Office.

Mr. THEODORE TAYLOR: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the Governments of the United States and of China have already appointed their representatives to the International Opium Commission; and what steps His Majesty's Government have taken, or are going to take, to be represented upon that Commission.

Sir EDWARD GREY: As far as I am aware, the Answer to the first Question is in the negative. As regards the second Question, the matter is now under consideration. His Majesty's Government will, however, certainly send representatives to the Commission and do all in their power to further its objects.

South London Electric Supply Corporation.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that Messrs. Price, Waterhouse, and Company, who are the private auditors of the South London Electric Supply Corporation, acting also as auditors appointed by the Board of Trade, have reported that they see no reason to question the charging to capital account by the company of officials' salaries amounting to £941; if he is aware that such a practice is not tolerated by the Local Government Board in connection with the accounts of local authorities; and if he will consider the propriety of appointing independent auditors in all such cases.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): Messrs. Price, Waterhouse, and Company have reported as stated. The amount quoted is represented to be the proportion of the salaries of the officials payable in respect of the time devoted by them to work properly chargeable to capital account. I understand that the Local Government Board do not consider that wages of permanent employees of local authorities should be paid out of borrowed money. As I informed my hon. friend in reply to a previous Question on the subject, I am watching the progress of the present arrangements carefully in case it should be necesary to make any modification in future.

Electrification of Railways.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been directed to the fact that the Prussian State railways administration is about to electrify some parts of its system; if, in the interests of British trade and locomotion, he can direct the attention of British railway companies to the fact; and if, in the event of British railway companies neglecting to avail themselves of electrical power, he will, in the public interest, introduce legisation to nationalise British railways in order to make them as efficient and as economical as those possessed by our greatest commercial rival.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no reason to doubt that railway companies in this country are aware of the progress of electric traction on foreign railway systems, and I may remind my hon. friend that several English railway companies have equipped their lines or portions of their lines for electric traction or are in course of doing so.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman mention any single company which is experimenting on the same scale and in the same way as the German State experiments in the Magdeburgh district?

MR. CHURCHILL: That is a matter of detail, and I must ask for notice.

Unclaimed Shares and Dividends.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether limited liability companies and corporations make any reports to the Companies Department of the Board of Trade with reference to profits from unclaimed shares and unclaimed dividends; and, if not, whether he will cause such particulars to be called for.

MR. CHURCHILL: No, Sir. Limited liability companies and corporations make no returns to the Board of Trade with reference to unclaimed shares and unclaimed dividends, and the Board of Trade have no power to call for such particulars.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state the total value of unclaimed railway stock and dividends; and if he can say to whom they go.

MR. CHURCHILL: Railway companies are required by the Regulation of Railways Act, 1868, to show in the general balance sheets included in their half-yearly accounts the amounts attributable to unpaid dividends and interest. The total of the amounts so shown in the latest accounts of fourteen of the principal companies is, I find on examination, £270,420, but this sum, I understand, includes, in addition to unclaimed dividends, amounts for which warrants have been issued to shareholders in the past year but not yet presented.

MR. J. MACVEAGH asked what period the figure mentioned covered.

MR. CHURCHILL said it was the amount there at the present time.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Where does the money go to?

MR. CHURCHILL: I imagine that that money is taken care of by those persons who have financial charge of the undertakings.

MR. J. MACVEAGH asked whether unclaimed railway stock and dividends of limited liability companies did not stand in the same position as the property of a man who died intestate, and should therefore go to the State; and whether the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take steps to recover that valuable property from companies who had no right whatever to it.

MR. CHURCHILL said he agreed with the hon. Gentleman in thinking that the whole question of unclaimed stock and unclaimed balances was a very important question.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly communicate his views to the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am in frequent communication with my right hon. friend.

Westerhope School Site.

*MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what is the approximate acreage of the site between Westerhope and North Walbottle which was recently purchased for a school by the Northumberland County Council from the Duke of Northumberland; what was the total price paid for it; and by how much the valuation for rating of the farm of which that site formed part has been reduced in consequence of the severance of that site.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.): I understand that the acreage of the site is three-quarters of an acre and that the purchase price apart from law costs, etc., was £698 15s. 6d. I gather that the price was fixed by arbitration. I am informed that at present no application has been received from the occupier for a reduction in the rateable value of the farm. I understand, however, that the rent has been reduced by 30s., and that consequently the rateable value of the farm would be reduced by about £1 7s.

*MR. DUNDAS WHITE: So for this property of which the annual value is about 30s., practically £700 was paid?

MR. MASTERMAN: I think that inference would be approximately correct.

*MR. DUNDAS WHITE: About five hundred years purchase.

The Unemployed.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if it has now been decided to make a grant of money towards the relief of the unemployed.

MR. MASTERMAN: The President is in communication with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: When are we likely to get an answer?

[No Answer was returned.]

Common Lands and Town Planning.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether Clause 7 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill proposes to enable local authorities, or any other bodies corporate, with the consent of the Local Government Board, to appropriate for building purposes common lands, recreation grounds, disused burial grounds, village greens, fuel allotments, open spaces, or other land vested in them and acquired by gift or purchase on the definite condition and trust that it should be permanently dedicated to the public use and enjoyment; and whether, in framing the clause, consideration was given to its deterrent effect upon persons who may be contemplating making gifts of land to local authorities or subscribing towards the acquisition of open spaces.

MR. MASTERMAN: The answer to the first part of the Question may be stated generally to be in the affirmative. The clause provides for the more effective application of the principle of existing enactments. I am not aware that these enactments have had any such deterrent effect as is referred to in the latter part of the Question, and I do not think that there is any reason to suppose that the clause would have this effect. Communications from the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society and others have, however, been made to the President respecting the clause, and they are receiving his careful consideration.

MR. ASHLEY: And should this clause become law the London County Council, with the consent of the Local Government Board, might build upon, say, Battersea Park?

MR. MASTERMAN: Certainly.

Post Office Savings Bank—Unclaimed Balances.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the total sum of the unclaimed balances since the establishment of the Post Office Savings Bank, and approximately the interest which would have accrued on this amount if the accounts had not been dormant.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.; for Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON): The approximate total of unclaimed balances standing to the credit of depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank could only be ascertained by a detailed examination of the ledgers; and the result would not justify the labour and expense involved. Interest is added to all accounts, whether recently operated on or not, within the limits prescribed by law.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Does my hon. friend mean to convey that the accounts of the Post Office Savings Bank are kept so loosely that the officials cannot add up the totals of the unpaid money?

CAPTAIN NORTON: Apparently that is so.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: May I ask my hon. friend whether he has any reason to believe that the Postmaster-General got a hint from the Treasury that he ought to answer the Question in this form?

CAPTAIN NORTON: I am afraid he has done it all off his own bat.

Kirkburton Endowments.

MR. CLOUGH (Yorkshire, W.R., Skipton): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether an inquiry has yet been held into the origin and present administration of the educational endowments at Kirkburton; whether one of His Majesty's Inspectors has reported fully on the premises and buildings of all the schools at Selby; and in what form he proposes to publish the Reports of His Majesty's inspector, and of the inquiry.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): A public inquiry has been held by an officer of the Board of Education into the administration of the Foundation of the Kirkburton Endowed School. The officer's Report of the inquiry is now under the consideration of the Board, who will in due course cause a copy of the Report to be deposited with the local education authority in accordance with the provisions of Section 73 (3) of the Elementary Education Act, 1870. His Majesty's inspector has not yet visited the schools at Selby. His Report will be forwarded to the local education authority and the managers in the ordinary course. It is not the practice of the Board to publish the Reports of their inspectors.

University of Durham.

MR. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Durham were endowed by Henry VIII. with revenues of the Benedictine Priory of Durham, and of Durham College, Oxford, and that at the Reformation these revenues, estimated at £710 per annum, were earmarked for higher education in the north; whether the total endowments of the University of Durham amount to £380,000; whether the University accounts have ever been published; and whether, seeing that the Royal Commission of 1862 reported the existence of irregularities in these accounts, he will make an inquiry as to the amount of the present revenues of the University of Durham, and the extent to which they are being diverted to the preparation of candidates for Holy Orders in the Church of England and other sectarian purposes.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have no information as to the first part of the Question. The Board of Education have no power to direct such an inquiry as my hon. friend suggests, which, so far as I am aware, could only be instituted by Royal Commission.

Royal London Friendly Society.

MR. CLOUGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies has received a petition from the members of the Royal London Friendly Society in accordance with the provisions of Section 76 of the Friendly Societies Act, 1896, for an inquiry, and in opposition to the policy of converting this friendly society into a mutual insurance society, which the committee of management propose to submit to special meetings to be held at the Royal Albert Hall on 24th June and at the Queen's Hall on 15th July; and what action the Chief Registrar proposes to take with regard to this petition.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): The Chief Registrar informs me that he received on 18th June an application from members of the Royal London Friendly Society for the appointment of an inspector to examine into and report on the affairs of the society, which is at present under his consideration, but he has no power to deal with the meetings of a society or to intervene in any question of the policy of converting a society into a company under the Friendly Societies Act.

Chancery Funds.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the total accumulations in the Suitors Fund and other funds in the Court of Chancery; the amount which is unclaimed; the cause of the accumulation; the amounts paid out and for what purpose; and what steps have been taken to make public the names of the individuals whose funds are derelict in order that their heirs may claim it.

I beg also to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the total sum which accrued within the last 100 years from unclaimed Government stock and dividends, at what figure the amount now stands, and what are the chief objects for which the amount has been drawn upon.

MR. HOBHOUSE: My right hon. friend has caused statements to be prepared in answer to the hon. Member's two Questions, which shall be printed and circulated with the Votes.

Price of Beef.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, having regard to the prevailing scarcity of cattle and the consequent high retail prices of beef, and the deprivation involved therein to many of the poorer classes, he will inquire how far the shortage is due to the country's dependence upon one source of supply; whether this source is controlled by a working arrangement between American houses; and will he consider the advisability of taking the embargo off the importation of Canadian cattle, and arrange for this House being afforded an early opportunity of considering the question.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): We can scarcely be said to depend for our beef upon only one source of supply. In addition to the large home production we obtain considerable quantities from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay. As to the extent of the supply it is to be observed that although fewer live cattle were imported in 1907 than in 1906, and again in the first five months of this year as compared with the corresponding period of 1907, we received a larger quantity of fresh beef, whilst the number of cattle in the United Kingdom last year was in excess of the average of the five preceding years and of any similar previous period. My reply to the last part of the Question must be that the Board have no intention of proposing any legislation on this subject.

Foot and Mouth Disease in the Netherlands.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg o ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the attention of the Board has been called to the statement made by the Dutch Minister of Agriculture in the Second Chamber of the States-General on Friday week, to the effect that foot-and-mouth disease has now disappeared from the Netherlands, and that it is the intention of his Government to withdraw the measures of precaution which hitherto it has been deemed necessary to take; and whether he will now consider the possibility of allowing the admission of Dutch cattle into Deptford Market.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: We are aware of the statement to which my hon. friend refers. It was of a more guarded character than is suggested in the Question, and in view of the fact that according to Dutch official returns 126 cases of foot-and-mouth disease occurred in Holland last month the Board would not be justified in adopting the suggestion made.

Lewis Cottars.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the Secretary for Scotland, in a letter to the Lewis District Committee dated 15th February, 1904, indicated that relief of congestion of Lewis cottars could only be secured under a scheme of voluntary migration to the mainland, will he state whether the Congested Districts Board have yet entered into negotiations for the acquisition of the necessary land; and, if not, will he explain the cause of the delay.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): As I have already informed my hon. friend, the question as to the numbers of cottars in the Lewis both willing to migrate and possessed of the qualifications for success is now with the Landward Committee of Stornoway.

MR. WEIR: When may we hope for a definite reply?

MR. SINCLAIR: The matter is in the hands of the Landward Committee. If the hon. Member has any complaint he can apply to that body at Stornoway.

MR. WEIR: Certainly not.

Dog Poisoning at Moy.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that, owing to the gamekeepers on the Mackintosh estate, near Moyhall, Inverness-shire, having placed poisoned food on parts of the estate close to a public thoroughfare, one resident at Moy has lost a valuable collie dog, whilst a dog belonging to another resident has sustained serious injury from the poison; and, seeing that similar cases of poisoning on this estate in 1905 were referred to Crown counsel for report, will he, with a view to action by the Procurator-Fiscal, order strict inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which the practice of placing poison on this estate has been renewed.

MR. SINCLAIR: With reference to the first part of the Question, I understand that one dog died at a place on the hill, four miles from the public road. There is no information before me to substantiate the allegation that the death was due to poisoned food having been placed on parts of the estate and the owner of the animal has made no complaint. With reference to the second part of the Question, a strict inquiry is being made.

Fraud on Glasgow Newspapers.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the case of R. Simpson, who was sentenced to five years penal servitude for conspiracy to defraud Glasgow newspapers; whether he is aware that this man was convicted entirely on similarity of handwriting and that since his incarceration anonymous letters have been received by the Judge and others in practically the same handwriting; and whether in these circumstances he will recommend the reduction of the sentence.

MR. SINCLAIR: I can only repeat the answer given to the hon. Member for the College Division of Glasgow on 16th March, in which I stated that I was unable to adopt the course suggested by my hon. friend.

Small Holdings in Scotland.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the fact that the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill was withdrawn by the Government last year and rejected this year in another place, will he state whether the Congested Districts Board now propose to resume the consideration of schemes for the creation of new holdings; and, if so, will efforts be made to acquire land from the proprietor of the island of Lewis to meet the needs of the 1,500 landless cottars in this island, and so avert breaches of the law such as have occurred at Vatersay and Barra.

MR. SINCLAIR: All opportunities which offer practicable schemes in Lewis and elsewhere will be closely watched by the Board.

MR. WEIR: Has any circular been sent out to the landlords?

MR. SINCLAIR: No, Sir; information is readily available by other means.

Barra.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether Lady Gordon Cathcart apportioned certain of her lands among the cottar population of Barra in the year 1884; and whether, on the appointment of the Crofters' Commission, with statutory powers to fix fair rents, they, on their first visit to Barra, reduced the rents which had been fixed by Lady Gordon Cathcart by 35 per cent.

MR. SINCLAIR: I understand that the facts are substantially as stated by my hon. friend.

MR. C. E. PRICE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can state the number of acres of land in Barra and Vatersay sold by Lady Gordon Cathcart to the Congested Districts Board, the dates of such sales, the price paid for each portion purchased, and the number of years' purchase which such price represents; and can he state how many families have been settled on the land so purchased.

MR. SINCLAIR: (1) In 1901 about 3,000 acres were sold to the Congested Districts Board for £7,500 on which fifty-eight families were settled. (2) In 1903 about sixty acres in Vatersay were conveyed to the Congested Districts Board subject to certain restrictions, £600 being paid and a 10s. feu-duty being charged. No settlement has been made on this land which has been used for potato patches. (3) The lands sold in 1901 formed part of the farm of Eoligarry and the whole of the farm of North Bay, the remaining part of the farm of Eoligarry was purchased by the tenant. It is estimated that the purchase price represented thirty-eight and a half years purchase of the proportion of the net rent effeiring to the lands purchased by the Congested Districts Board. With regard to the lands conveyed in 1903, it is difficult to estimate the number of years' purchase paid for them, as they formed part of a farm partly arable and partly grazing.

Irish Supreme Court—Unclaimed Funds.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he can state the total money in the hands of the Irish Courts; how much of it is unclaimed; whether any of the unclaimed money has at any time been drawn upon; and, if so, for what purposes; and whether any steps have ever been taken to ascertain if there are any rightful heirs.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool Exchange): I am informed that out of the total moneys which have stood in the books of the Accountant-General to the credit of suitors in the Irish Supreme Court the sum of £251,244 has been paid towards the cost of building the Law Courts. The total amount remaining in the hands of the Court is £242,537, of which £177,264 stands to the credit of the dormant accounts, that is to say, moneys unclaimed for fifteen years and upwards. The dormant account is drawn upon from time to time to make payments to suitors who substantiate their claims. The titles of the accounts which have not been dealt with for fifteen years and upwards are advertised in the *Dublin Gazette* once in every three years.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: When these funds were being drawn upon for the erection of the Law Courts did any official do as bank directors are doing and claim it to be entirely a private matter as between solicitor and client?

MR. CHERRY: This was money unclaimed for more than 100 years. It was before the union between the two countries.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: And the holding up of the money only began when the English got possession of the country?

Irish Chancery Funds.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he can state if the Court of Chancery in Ireland holds any unclaimed property or valuables other than cash; if so, whether he can say of what the property or valuables chiefly consist; and what steps have been taken to ascertain whether there are any rightful heirs.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that the Court of Chancery in Ireland holds no unclaimed property or valuables other than cash and invested securities. The titles of the various suitors' accounts to the credit of which the funds in question stand are published in the *Dublin Gazette* once in every three years.

Proposed Pier at Portmagee.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the correspondence which has taken place between the Kerry County Council, the Congested Districts Board, and the Under-Secretary at Dublin Castle, with reference to the proposed pier at Portmagee, County Kerry; and whether, in view of the fact that the county council has agreed to contribute £600 towards the cost, and that the Congested Districts Board has approved of the work as being one of great utility to an important fishing centre, he will state what steps, if any, will be taken to secure the construction of the pier under the Marine Works Act.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I am aware of the correspondence referred to, and the facts are as stated in the second part of the Question. The Commissioners of Public Works have been asked to report upon the suggested extension of the pier at Portmagee, and upon the receipt of their report the matter will receive full consideration. I cannot at present make any statement as to the possibility of providing funds for the work under the Marine Works Act.

Irish University Scheme.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commissioners of National Education have made any request for the inclusion of some representatives of Irish primary schools on the governing bodies of the proposed Universities; and, if so, can he say on what ground the claims of those connected with primary education have been absolutely unnoticed.

MR. BIRRELL: The Answer is in the negative.

Irish Proclaimed Counties.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the proclamations issued on 27th August by the Lord-Lieutenant in Council under the statute of King William IV., declaring the counties of Clare King's, Galway, Leitrim, Longford, and Roscommon to be in a state of disturbance, necessitating the employment of additional police, are still in operation; to what extent has the police force of each of these counties been supplemented; and if he will state whether any, and, if so, what, improvement has since been effected in their condition.

Mr. BIRRELL: The proclamations are still in force. The police forces of the counties in question have been increased by the following numbers:—Clare, 57; Galway, 337; King's County, 24; Leitrim, 19; Longford, 21; and Roscommon, 122. I understand that there has been some improvement in some of the counties, and the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary informs me that he has no doubt that the increased force has had a preventive effect as regards disturbance in all the counties, and has to some extent restored confidence.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): Does the right hon. Gentleman consider that these counties are now in an entirely satisfactory condition?

Mr. BIRRELL: I know of no county which is in an entirely satisfactory condition.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Not even the noble Lord's own county!

Kenmare Estate, Kerry.

Mr. J. MURPHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners have yet succeeded in restoring a single evicted tenant on the Kenmare estate, County Kerry, on which the landlord promised over a year ago to allow them full assistance in such restoration; whether he can say how many of their inspectors have visited the district in connection with the matter; and what is the reason that no results follow from their efforts in securing the restoration of the evicted tenants on the estate.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners understand that the evicted tenants on the estate in question have not yet been restored by the owner. The matter is at present under the consideration of the Commissioners, and is the subject of negotiations with the owner. Various inspectors have visited the district in connection with the cases of evicted tenants.

Mr. J. MURPHY: But for twelve months they have done nothing whatever.

Mr. BIRRELL: Negotiations are in hand, and I hope satisfactory results will follow.

Coltsmann Estate, Kerry.

Mr. J. MURPHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have sanctioned a sale to the planter in possession of the evicted farm of Denis Healy, at Knockanes, County Kerry, on the Coltsmann estate, though all the representative persons of the district, and even the landlord himself, had requested them not to do so; if so, whether the Commissioners can give any explanation of their action in destroying the rights of the evicted tenant in question; and whether they propose to follow a similar policy in dealing with other evicted tenants.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that the farm in question was vested in Timothy Kennedy as tenant-purchaser in July, 1907. Kennedy was not a planter. He acquired the farm under the will of John Healy, who himself had purchased the tenant's interest in the farm. The Commissioners propose to provide Denis Healy with a farm elsewhere if opportunity should arise.

Mr. J. MURPHY: Is it true the Commissioners sanctioned the sale against the wishes of everyone in the district?

Mr. BIRRELL: I will inquire.

Mr. J. MURPHY: It is the fact.

The Union Jack at Westminster.

Mr. MEYSEY THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth): I wish to ask by whose instructions the National Flag is hoisted upside down on the Victoria Tower to-day? Has it any national significance or is it merely indicative of the attitude of the present Government?

[No Answer was returned.]

CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE (IRELAND) ACT (1887) REPEAL BILL.

Reported, without Amendment, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 195.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 195.]

Bill [not amended] to be taken into consideration upon Thursday.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Sir Frederick Cawley; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Rogers.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Children Bill): Viscount Castlereagh; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill) Mr. Hay.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. Wiles; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Sir Walter Foster.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee That they had discharged the followin Member from Standing Committee ((in respect of the Telegraph Constructio and Post Office Savings Bank Bills). Sir Francis Edwards; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bills): Mr. Lyulph Stanley.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Mr. Stuart-Wortley reported from the Chairmen's Panel; That they had discharged Mr. Laurence Hardy from being Chairman of Standing Committee B at the conclusion of the Children Bill; and had appointed Sir David Brynmor Jones to act as Chairman of Standing Committee B in his place.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

SHOP CLUBS ACT (1902) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To extend the provisions of Section 1 of the Shop Clubs Act, 1902, to membership of trade unions and industrial and provident societies," presented by Mr. John Ward; supported by Mr. Enoch Edwards, Mr. Brace, Mr. Maddison, Sir Randal Cremer, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Steadman; to be read a second time upon Friday, and to be printed. [Bill 278.]

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

John James Oddy, esquire, for the County of York, Eastern Part of the West Riding, Pudsey Division.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) moved to insert at the beginning of the clause the words: "There shall be paid to." He explained that the Bill as it stood said that every person who fulfilled certain conditions should be entitled to a pension, but Ministers who had spoken on the Bill had expressed two different views. While the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that the Bill was based on the theory that as everyone contributed to the taxes everyone had the right to a pension on reaching a certain age, the Secretary for War took a totally different view, his view of the Bill being that it was a mere extension of the principle of outdoor relief. It was plain that these two theories of the Bill were quite distinct and the distinction had very important consequences when they approached the consideration of the measure. At the present moment the general drafting of the Bill left it, he thought, a little doubtful as to which of the two principles was put forward by the Government. There was in the first clause a sort of assumption that there was to be a universal grant of 5s. a week to everybody. But when they came to look at the conditions placed upon that grant it was quite plain that the Government, probably after some considerable debate in the Cabinet, had reverted to the Secretary of State for War's view, that it was an extension of the outdoor relief principle, and, therefore, they made the grant applicable not to everybody who had reached a certain age, but only to those who the Government thought were proper objects for the bounty of the State. He confessed the distinction, to his mind, was one of great importance. It seemed to him that, the House having laid down the general principle that there was a right to receive 5s. a week by any section of the community, it was absolutely impossible to confine that right by any limitations whatsoever. He did not see how, when they had enacted Clause 1, they could bring forward any logical answer to the Amendment of hon. Members below the gangway who proposed to strike out all limitations and conditions. Assuming the right to receive pensions, what business had they to inquire whether a man had worked or not? Assuming the right to receive pensions, what business had they to inquire whether a man had received Poor Law relief or not? Then again they were met with the astounding proposition that if the man happened to live in the same house as another person to whom a pension was due by right under this clause, then the amount of the pension was cut down by 25 per cent. He thought the House must make up their mind definitely when they were making this new and very important departure—were they to say that the people had a right to the pensions or were they to say that they received them out of the bounty of the State? He did not desire to occupy an undue amount of time, but he would like to know what view the Government took upon this very important point.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 5, at the beginning, to insert the words, 'There shall be paid to.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I must confess I do not see the object of this Amendment even from the point of view of the noble Lord. The noble Lord wants to make it perfectly clear that the pensioner has no absolute right to receive the pension, and he proposes to establish that principle by inserting the words he "shall be paid."

LORD R. CECIL: I did not want to trouble the Committee over the drafting of the Amendment, but I will explain how I ask that it shall be carried out. The first clause stands at present "Every person . . . . shall be entitled"; that is the skeleton of the section. I propose to say: "There shall be paid to every person." That is the difference. I do not say they are entitled to, but that they shall be paid.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: When I went through the Amendments this morning, I thought the object was to make a new departure and to make it perfectly clear that a man was entitled as a national right to demand a pension. I do not think any ordinary man even in this Parliament could have possibly conceived that the intention of Parliament was to show that he was not entitled to that as a right by inserting the words: "There shall be paid." The noble

Lord thinks that it would. Let us assume that it would; then if pensions are really established the man who is not entitled to them would be paid. What we want to do is to make it perfectly clear that these pensioners are persons who conform to the conditions which we lay down in the Bill. We shall discuss the conditions later on, but the men who conform to these conditions will be entitled as a matter of right to a pension.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): The point the noble Lord has raised is one that would, I think, be more conveniently raised at a later stage when we discuss the proposed limitations of the Government and the principles on which they propose to grant the pensions. The Amendment has raised the question in rather an inconvenient way. It appears to me that the introduction of the words now proposed would lead to a result which would not be what my noble friend has in view nor in accordance with the wishes of those who hold strong views as to the proposed limitations. Under these circumstances, I am afraid it would be impossible for me to support the Amendment.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he was not sure that he agreed with his right hon. friend. He thought the Committee was indebted to his noble friend for having moved the Amendment, because it had enabled them to obtain a clearer view of the intentions of the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that in his opinion every person above the age of seventy was entitled to receive from the State an old-age pension, and then he went on to say there would be certain prohibitions and conditions. But if they once told a person that he was entitled by right to an old-age pension, what right had they to lay down any conditions at all? That was why he supported his hon. and learned friend. What the noble Lord wished to show was that it was not the right of everyone to receive an old-age pension, but that under certain circumstances the State from its charity would give to certain people an old-age pension. That was the difference between the two proposals. It was extremely difficult to lay down in an Act of Parliament words which would be understood by everyone, but he maintained that there was a difference between the words used in the Bill and the words of the proposed Amendment. He thought that was proved by the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had refused to accept the Amendment of his noble friend. He did not conceal from the Committee that he was against the old-age pensions altogether; that being so, he should certainly support his noble friend.

Mr. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that although he could not support the Amendment of his noble friend yet it seemed to him a very reasonable attitude for him to take up. There was good ground for the Amendment, because it was very important that the Committee should be able to ascertain what was really in the mind of the Government on this particular point. They were naturally in a state of uncertainty as to what view the Government took, because the Secretary of State for War told them one thing and the Chancellor of the Exchequer something totally different. The Minister for War clearly considered that these old-age pensions were to be given not as a right but really to follow up the history of the Poor Law from the time of Queen Elizabeth. The right hon. Gentleman took fifty minutes to explain the connection to the House—to make sure that the connection should be quite clear in their minds—how the whole system worked together and how essential it was that these old-age pensions should be on the same footing as the contributions made for outdoor relief and for indoor relief. While he thought the wording of the Bill in this particular was an improvement on the Amendment suggested by his noble friend, yet he thought the noble Lord was well justified in moving the Amendment after the extraordinary attitude of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War who, notwithstanding the extremely short time at their disposal explained to the House at considerabl length the history of the Poor Law from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to

1834 and from 1834 to the present time. While he could not support the Amendment of his noble friend yet he thought the point might well be considered by the House, and moreover, that they ought to have a satisfactory explanation from the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for War showing how they could possibly sit side by side supporting the Bill as it stood.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 55; Noes, 293. (Division List No. 130.)

AYES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Helmsley, Viscount
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Oddy, John James
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Winterton, Earl

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Lord Robert Cecil and Sir Frederick Banbury.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Jsoeph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John

Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen's Co
Menzies, Walter
Middlebrook, William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The Amendment of the hon. Member for Norwood should come after the word "shall" in line 7, as is proposed by another hon. Member. The next Amendment in the name of the noble Lord (limiting the pension to persons who had made a contribution towards it), as I have said, should be discussed on Clause 2.

LORD R. CECIL said the Bill was very remarkably drawn, and though there were conditions contained in Clause 2 there were also conditions contained in Clause 1 and Clause 3. As there was a condition in the form of a proviso in Clause 1 cutting down the pension in certain cases to 3s. 9d. instead of 5s., he submitted that it was not an inconvenient course to discuss other conditions at this stage.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I have looked very carefully at the Bill in regard to that matter, and the conditions in Clause 1 in my opinion only apply to the matters which hang upon the amount of the pension and do not apply to such conditions as I am now speaking of.

LORD R. CECIL said the question of contribution did affect the amount. It was not only a question of payment. It affected both the amount and the question of payment, but it would be almost impossible to deal with it, if Clause 1 was passed as it stood, with the question of contributions on Clause 2, because they would have settled the amount of the pension, whereas the whole theory of contribution involved that the amount of the pension would be to some extent dependent on the amount of contribution.

*THE CHAIRMAN said that Clause 2 was clearly a condition clause according to the way in which the Bill was drafted.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) said he understood there would be no difficulty, according to the ruling of the Chairman, in introducing the whole question of contribution upon Clause 2. It appeared to be rather difficult as the Bill was drawn, but he understood it was a course that the Chairman favoured. It was a discussion which must take place some time in the Committee, and he thought it had better take place on Clause 2 than on Clause 1.

*THE CHAIRMAN: That is certainly my view, and I should be very sorry to cut out the question. I should certainly do nothing of the kind. I think Clause 2 is the right place to take a discussion on the contributory system. The same remark as to conditions applies to the Amendments of the hon. Members for Norwood, Preston, and Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities. The next Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Norwood should be raised on Clause 10. The next Amendment in the name of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone is consequential. The Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for North West Lanark is outside the scope of the Bill. The next Amendment in order is that of the hon. Member for the City of London.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) asked if they were to understand from the Chairman's ruling on the Amendment of his hon. friend the Member for Lanark, that they could not raise any question of a pension by reason of infirmity at any point in the Bill.

*THE CHAIRMAN: If the right hon. Gentleman means an Amendment which would allow an infirm person of a younger age than seventy to receive a pension, that would be in order, but not as the hon. Member proposes to bring it in here. That would indeed be outside the scope of the financial Resolution.

SIR F. BANBURY moved to insert the words after "fulfilled," "and who is not subject to the disqualifications mentioned in this Act." He said that Clause 2 laid down the statutory conditions, and Clause 3 the disqualifications. One would have thought that the Government when they put in the conditions laid down by the Act would have deemed it necessary to put in also the disqualifications. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might say that he had met that point in Clause 1 by the words: "And so long as he is not disqualified under this Act." He maintained that the proper place to put in those words was after the word "fulfilled," and not at the end of the subsection, where they might be taken to have a somewhat different meaning. This was more or less of a drafting Amendment which he contended would make the meaning of the clause perfectly clear.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after the word 'fulfilled,' to insert the words 'and who is not subject to the disqualifications mentioned in this Act.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that, as the hon. Baronet had already pointed out, this was a drafting Amendment. He had consulted those who were responsible for the drafting of the Bill, and they adhered to their view that the Bill was much better in its present form. The point raised was covered by the words: "So long as he is not disqualified under this Act." If the hon. Baronet looked at Clause 3 he would see that the very first words were—

> "A person shall be disqualified for receiving or continuing to receive an old-age pension under this Act.—"

Those words clearly pointed to the disqualifications in Clause 3. Under those circumstances he could not accept the responsibility of throwing over the advice of the legal gentleman who had advised him, even on the high authority of the hon. Baronet.

SIR F. BANBURY said the appeal he made was to the right hon. Gentleman for his own opinion, and not for the opinion of those who had drafted the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman knew bad drafting, and he would like to know if he thought the words of the Amendment would be an improvement.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he thought the words of the clause as they stood were better than those suggested in the Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY: I ask leave to withdraw my Amendment.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) asked if it was not a very unusual thing not to have a single Law Officer of the Crown present to deal with points of this kind.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (MR. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.) said that as a lawyer he did not think the words of the Amendment were necessary.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. BOWLES moved to add in line 7, after the word "shall," the words "until Parliament otherwise determines." Some hon. Members might think those words were unnecessary and superfluous, but he thought he could give the House good reasons why in this particular case the words were not superfluous, and why there were really good grounds for the contention that they ought to be put in. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had already told the House that this clause, as it was drawn, gave an absolute right to all persons in this country, either now or hereafter, who, so long as this clause remained on the Statute-book, fulfilled the conditions or escaped the disqualifications set forth in the Bill. They were asked to promise this to all persons of both sexes upon the faith of Parliament, and he submitted that it was a very serious, grave, and far-reaching promise to give. If the clause remained as it was drafted, it would be taken as a final and irrevocable promise that so long as a person fulfilled the conditions and escaped the disqualifications of this clause he would be entitled to an old-age pension. The Committee was not in a position to make a promise of that kind, raising expectations of such a far-reaching nature. They were not now dealing with their own money, but with the money of the taxpayers as a whole. This was not a small and definite expectation; it was unmeasured and immeasurable; and to make an absolute promise of this kind on faith of Parliament to all persons in these islands was really a very strong thing to do. That consideration was strengthened by the particular circumstances of the question. The Bill was admittedly nothing more nor less than an experiment, and if it failed the burden of putting it right would rest upon the Unionist Party. Of course, if it succeeded the Government would no doubt claim all the credit for it. The plan was not put forward as final, and even if it succeeded Parliament would have to deal with it again and again in the light of weightier considerations which were not now known, and which had not been considered by the House. The Secretary of State for War had told them that the question raised in the Bill was only one small corner of the great problem of poverty, and that there was one special class of the community who would benefit, and they were the deserving persons over seventy years of age whom the Commission now sitting upon the Poor Law, considering the question of poverty in all its bearings, would exclude from their consideration. This class were to be dealt with in advance of the Report of that Commission, and to that extent they were prejudging what the Commission might have to say on the subject. What authority had the right hon. Gentleman for making that statement? He did not know what ground there was for supposing that the Commission would have nothing to say as to the proper way of dealing with those persons. Most assuredly the Commission would make recommendations as to the proper way of dealing with the persons this Bill sought to benefit. The House would be bound to consider the Report of the Commission soon, and he would ask those who suggested that the words he proposed to put into the clause were unnecessary to refer to Clause 3, subsection (*a*), where the very same words occurred and they were given clearly to understand that the whole scheme, so far as pauper disqualification was concerned, would receive careful reconsideration on the receipt of the Report of the Commission on the Poor Law. The Commission, it seemed to him, would probably suggest a different, a better, and a cheaper method of dealing with the persons sought to be benefited by the Bill. After the experiment now proposed had been tried, experience might show—a year might perhaps suffice—that the people of this country were not quite so ready to accept benefits at the hands of their neighbours as was at present supposed. Experience might also show that the taxpayers of the country were not at all desirous to add indefinitely and immeasurably to their burden in order to subsidise failure however deserving the victims of it might be. They ought to be able when they came to deal with the whole question in the light of the Report of the Commission to give unprejudiced consideration to the case, and that would be impossible if they left the clause as it now stood and gave a solemn pledge to all persons affected by the Bill that they would in future, if they fulfilled certain conditions, be entitled as a matter of right to old-age pensions. They ought to make it clearly understood that this was not a final and conclusive promise to all persons that, subject to certain conditions, they would be entitled when seventy years of age to pensions from the whole body of the taxpayers. Therefore, he thought the words of the Amendment were necessary.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 7, after the word 'shall' to insert the words 'until Parliament otherwise determines.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he might object to this Amendment on the ground that the words were unnecessary, because every Act of Parliament remained valid only until Parliament otherwise determined. But he did not take that point. The hon. Member wanted the experimental character of the measure to be stated in the operative words of the statute. That was the hon. Member's idea, and that was why he objected to the Amendment. It was perfectly true that he had himself said that the scheme was an experimental one. It was experimental in regard to its conditions, qualifications, and disqualifications, but there was one part which was not experimental, and that was the part which established the right of men over seventy, under certain conditions which might be altered from time to time, to a pension. He would like to know whether the hon. Gentleman wished to suggest that the Party to which he belonged would reconsider that proposition. So far as hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House were concerned they did not propose to open that question. Did the hon. Gentleman wish by the words he proposed to make it provisional that the persons in whose case certain conditions had been fulfilled should be entitled to a pension? Surely he did not wish to make that experimental. Some hon. Members wanted to make the old-age pension scheme contributory. That was a different matter, and it would come, if it came at all, by grafting a contributory scheme on to the parent scheme. The hon. Gentleman had pointed out that the words of his Amendment occurred in Clause 3, subsection (*a*). The words were put in Clause 3 to make it clear that the disqualification referred to in the subsection should be "until Parliament otherwise determines." Of course, they wanted to make it clear that that was provisional and ought to be provisional, and that when the Poor Law Commission reported they would reconsider that disqualification and the whole of their attitude towards those who were in receipt of Poor Law relief at the present moment. He had introduced the words in order to stamp on the face of the disqualification its temporary character, but they did not wish to introduce words in the first clause which would indicate that it was of a temporary character. Their object would be not to cut down numbers but to add to them in future, and, therefore, they could not use the words in the first clause which were used in the third. No man in the House believed that, once they had embarked on this scheme, they could ever go back upon it, he did not care which Party was in power. He was sure the hon. Member would not take the responsibility of saying on behalf of the Party with which he was associated that it was of an experimental or temporary kind. He objected to words of this kind which would take away the hope which the hon. Gentleman seemed to think they ought not to grant to old people. Parliament ought to give a statutory right to a pension, and for that reason he must object to the Amendment.

Mr. WALTER LONG said he regretted the decision of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was very much astonished at it. In the Second Reading debate the right hon. Gentleman spoke with almost unprecedented insistency as to the fact that the scheme was experimental, not only in regard to the limitation, but in regard to the whole, and stated that the future affirmation or alteration of the scheme by Parliament would be dependent upon the experience gained under the Bill. Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the words "until Parliament otherwise determines" were put into Clause 3 to indicate that it might be necessary to alter the limitations as time went on. His hon. friend had moved the Amendment on a different ground. It was pointed out on the Second Reading that the Bill only did a portion of the work which must be done if they were to deal successfully with the question of the aged poor. The Committee which inquired into the subject in 1899 pointed out that they could not possibly deal with the question of the aged poor successfully unless the Poor Law was amended at the same time. It was within the knowledge of everybody who had had to deal with the poor of over seventy that a large proportion of them could not possibly look after themselves even if they had a pension of 5s. a week. Apart from the limitations it was proposed to give them a pension altogether inadequate to the needs, and that went to the root of the whole scheme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had asked whether the hon. Member for Norwood would suggest to his Party on this side of the House that they should abolish the whole system of pensions. In the Second Reading debate nobody took up the position that pensions should not be granted, although they differed in regard to the method in which they should be granted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that a great deal of the argument in favour of the Bill must be based on conjecture, and that a great deal of the evidence available was evidence not of fact but of opinion. Therefore experience alone could tell how the scheme was going to work. He would support the Amendment.

Mr. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) expressed the hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would reconsider this matter. He agreed with the Amendment because he believed that unless the proposed words were inserted they would tie their hands, and they would not be able to alter the conditions of the Bill. If the words of the Amendment were not inserted, they would by passing the Bill give a vested interest to every person over seventy years of age who fulfilled certain conditions. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer showed how necessary it was that the Amendment should be accepted. The right hon. Gentleman stated that while he would not go back on the policy of providing old-age pensions, he contemplated the possibility of having to alter the conditions. Unless those words were put in they could not do it, for everybody would be entitled to come forward and say: "Parliament has given me a vested interest in this pension." The provision was perfectly clear—

> "Every person in whose case the conditions for the receipt of an old-age pension are fulfilled, shall be entitled to receive such a pension under this Act so long as those conditions continue to be fulfilled, and so long as he is not disqualified under this Act for the receipt of the pension."

If they wanted to alter any one of those conditions, any old person over seventy years of age would be entitled to come forward and say: "You are depriving me of a vested interest," and the only answer would be that it was not intended that those precise conditions would be fulfilled; that what they did intend was to keep their hands free to alter the conditions. Therefore, for those reasons he would support the Amendment.

Sir F. BANBURY said he had listened with considerable interest to the speeches of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister on previous stages of the Bill, and he certainly understood that they both said that this Bill was to be regarded as experimental. He accepted that statement; but now they said that it was not to be experimental except with regard to disqualifications. That altered the scope of the Bill very materially. Were they now to understand that in the event of the taxpayer saying that he found giving a pension in this way revived the evils of the Poor Law prior to 1834, they would find themselves in the position that all they had to do was to alter the disqualifications? Hon. Members below the gangway said that the disqualifications should be reduced. No doubt that was so; and he was afraid that unless this Amendment were carried, after what had been said by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite, the result would be that they would have committed themselves to giving everyone seventy years of age a pension of 5s. a week who was qualified by the conditions of the Bill. By altering the disqualifications they might take away a right given by the Act, and according to well established practice they could not take away such a right without compensation. That was the old principle laid down by the Liberal Party in the days when it was a Liberal Party represented by men like his hon. friend the Member for Preston. Now all that was changed, and the guiding spirits of the Liberal Party were the hon. Members below the gangway. They all knew what those Gentlemen wanted. They wanted the disqualifications abolished, the age reduced, and the amount increased. But Parliament ought not to commit itself to that principle until it had further knowledge of how the scheme was going to work. If the Bill became law, and the Unionist Party coming into power wanted to alter the disqualifications, they would find themselves in an extremely difficult position. Unionists wanted to guard themselves against that. Supposing they found that the disqualifications did not work; that the wastrel and the drunkard managed to get in for a pension somehow or other—that the biggest liar had got the biggest pension, as the hon. Member for Preston put it—there would be the difficulty of the vested interest which they could not alter. He trusted that the right hon. Gentleman would reconsider the decision he had arrived at and allow the Amendment of his hon. friend to be put in. It could not do any harm whatever. It gave a right to Parliament to review the whole question in three, four, or five years time, if they found that what was admittedly an experiment should, without being altered, prove to be a great burden on the taxpayers of the country, although a corresponding benefit to the people who were to receive it.

Lord R. CECIL said that he had listened to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and thought that his argument proceeded on the fallacy that he conceived that this clause laid down the abstract proposal that an old-age pension ought to be given. That was not what the clause did at all; and even if it did, it would be a very strange thing to say that an old-age pension of 5s. a week should be granted to every person, or rather that every person should be entitled to an old-age pension on certain conditions. What were those conditions? Some of them were the most absurd ever put into a Parliamentary Bill. For instance, there was the condition in subsection (*b*) of Clause 3, about a man being disqualified who habitually refused to work, or was a drunkard. The man might be drunk every day of the week, but he might work every day in the week, and in that case, he thought, it would be very difficult for the pension committee to refuse him a pension. There were many other cases which the ingenuity of hon. Members might suggest as possibly turning up in the working of the measure. His hon. friend desired to put in the statute what the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and every Minister who had spoken had said over and over again—that this was an experiment, and that they were going to alter it. They had been almost pathetically frank in their statements as to alteration. That being the case, let them see in the forefront of the measure that this was a temporary and provisional proposal. They were going to have very important information given to them in less than a year. In those circumstances let them make it quite clear that the whole scheme was provisional, and insert those words which the Government themselves thought appropriate in another part of the Bill.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that he did not approach this question from the same point of view as the hon. Member for the City of London. He had no desire to go back on the decision of the House that a scheme of old-age pensions should be established. He believed that that was the opinion and feeling held by nearly every Member of the House. But was there a single Member who desired that the scheme embodied in the Bill should be permanently the scheme of old-age pensions in this country? Certainly the Government did not think so themselves. They had expressed themselves as very doubtful as to the working of some of the restrictions they had introduced; and they had hinted that some of the restrictions did not in some respects go far enough, while others, in some respects, went too far to secure the aim which was common to every Member of the House who desired old-age pensions. On whatever other points they might differ, they did not desire to see the particular scheme embodied in the Bill remain as the only contribution which Parliament and the country made towards a State-aided provision for the poor. Under these circumstances, surely it was reasonable and in the natural course to give notice to all whom it concerned that the scheme which they were passing was provisional and only intended to endure until such time as they had obtained extended experience and acquired the resources to bring a better scheme into existence. It had been said that this Amendment was necessary because otherwise they would be giving a Parliamentary title to a pension to every person who arrived at the age of seventy. But they would be giving more; they would be giving an expectancy to every person who approached the age of seventy—an expectancy becoming more and more tangible and real as that age came nearer. Were they to stereotype for all time to those who had got a pension, or still more to those who came after them, the particular form and conditions embodied in the Bill? That was, he ventured to say, not what a single Member desired to do. He beseeched the Government to accept the words of the Amendment, and for this reason. He did not know to what extent the Government had considered the German scheme of old-age and infirmity pensions. From the speech of the Prime Minister he should gather that they had not considered it at all, because they entirely ignored the infirmity part of the German scheme. The right hon. Gentleman had made a statement to the House which was most misleading as to the character of the German scheme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a reference to the German scheme in much more favourable terms, and had held out to the House that it was the desire of the Government at some time or another to embody in the plan which was now actually before them a larger and a bigger scheme, similar to the German, which would not only give a man some provision for old age from the State, but with his own help, based on other help, would come to his relief when it was actually needed and would not give him arbitrary relief at seventy years of age. What they hoped to arrive at was that at the time when a man came to need an infirmity pension he should have it. In order to keep the ground clear, for the wider, more beneficial and more practical scheme which many of them had in their minds, though they had at this moment neither the knowledge nor the means to proceed with it, he would suggest to the Government that they should accept the Amendment.

*MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) said the Bill had been described by his right hon. friend not only "as an experiment, and a great experiment," but also as "a beginning, and a real beginning." Those words should be emphasised at this moment. What was the meaning of a real beginning? Most people would understand that it meant the laying down in the beginning of the Bill, as in this Bill, that certain people not suffering under certain disqualifications should receive as a matter of right an old-age pension. No doubt the disqualifications would be modified, but if this was to be the real beginning of a great national system it must be firmly laid on permanent principles, which would not be altered by this, or by any other Parliament.

*MR. HAROLD COX expressed the hope that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give way on this point. Why was the condition as to the age of seventy to be irrevocable and that as to pauperism be revocable? He could not see any reason for the distinction, and, therefore, he thought these words were necessary to show that all the circumstances would be subject to revision at some future date.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said he failed to see why this House of Commons should pledge all future Parliaments with regard to this particular scheme. It was very doubtful whether this non-contributory scheme would be a success or not. Personally, he always failed to see how, if outdoor relief was likely to promote pauperism, a scheme of old-age pensions of a non-contributory character was likely to do the reverse. If time was going to prove that a non-contributory scheme of old-age pensions brought evils in its train, ought Parliament to be prevented from altering the scheme now proposed to a contributory scheme? He thought it should be left to Parliaments of the future to alter the scheme if they thought fit. But presumably Parliament would be able to alter the scheme even if these words were not included. What was the chief objection raised by the Prime Minister to a contributory scheme of old-age pensions? It was that it would take a long time before it came into force, and that the country could not wait the time which a contributory scheme would take to evolve. But what was there to prevent this scheme being transitional until a contributory scheme could be evolved? It seemed to him folly to throw away a safeguard like that. It would do no harm to the proposal of the Government. He should support the Amendment.

MR. COURTENAY WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield) said he did not think at first the acceptance of these words would create any vested interest, but now the debate had shown that the Unionist view was that hon. Gentlemen opposite would not repeal the Bill, but they wanted full opportunity to curtail its operation. Every change could be effected without the addition of these words, and having regard to the extreme anxiety displayed by the Unionist Party that no difficulty should be placed in the way of striking some people out in the future whom they desired to strike out, he hoped that the Government would see that every obstacle was placed in their path, and keep the Bill as it was.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give way on this Amendment. He pointed out that when the Bill was introduced the Government promised that every reasonable Amendment should be considered, and, if possible, accepted. Now the Committee was told that these words were not necessary;

that Parliament was all-powerful and could do anything. It was, however, a very great hardship that these old people were faced with. There ought to be no loss in the future. It was hardly respectful to the Commission which had been sitting for so long and which would soon report to bring in a cut and dried scheme like this without waiting for their recommendations.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he had listened to two speeches in opposition to the Amendment of his hon. friend. The hon. Member for Lichfield, who had just spoken in a tone that was not likely to smooth debate on a Bill with the general object of which both sides of the House were agreed, had said that this Amendment only affected the limitations of the Bill, but he was quite mistaken. If he would look at Clause 1, subsection 3, he would see a limitation laid down to which many on the Unionist side of the House strongly objected. That limitation was not set down in Clause 3, but in Clause 1, subsection 3. Why were the Government going to stereotype that subsection? The more important speech in opposition to the Amendment was made by the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill. That speech was conciliatory and courteous in tone, but it seemed to miss the point made in the Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman's argument was that if these words were inserted in the first part of the subsection it would practically put in the idea that at some future time Parliament intended to exercise certain rights. He would read to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the subsection in order to show how the Amendment would affect it—

> "Every person in whose case the conditions laid down by this Act for the receipt of old-age pension (in this Act referred to as statutory conditions) are fulfilled, shall, until Parliament otherwise determines."

That did not lay down that people over seventy were to get pensions, but that everybody was to get the pension who fulfilled "the conditions laid down in this Act." That was a very different thing from the general proposition that pensions to old persons over seventy were desirable, indeed necessary. It laid down the proposition that under the provisions of this Act these persons were to receive pensions under conditions which might be permanent, or might be modified by way of statute. He did not think that any lawyer would deny that that was the true construction of the first paragraph as it stood, and that construction was provisionally modified in its intention and colour by the Amendment proposed by his hon. friend. The Government were precluded from denying that because of the fact that they had themselves put in these words as a qualification in Clause 3. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had argued that the words of the Amendment were unnecessary because Parliament had always power over its own acts. He would ask the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the Government could possibly reconcile the attitude they had taken up on this Amendment with their own general professions made on the Second Reading of the Bill and the particular drafting which they had introduced into the third clause. Their general professions were that, while everybody desired that there should be pensions for the aged poor, the conditions under which those pensions were to be granted were to be experimental and that they would probably require to be revised in the light of our own experience, in the light of foreign experience, and in the light of the reports which they were to have on the general system of Poor Law relief in this country from the Commission now sitting. Could anyone say, in revising their procedure, that they might not have to say to some people receiving old-age pensions—if it was desirable to give them to persons over seventy—that they ought not to be qualified to receive them. The Government desired to prevent wastrels from receiving pensions. The Committee did not know by what machinery the Government were to exclude wastrels. He understood from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that other words were to be put in.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Modifications.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR asked whether, if modifications were to be introduced by the Government, the House have an opportunity of discussing them? Were they to be told that these words, whenever they were introduced, were to give everybody the right to receive a pension who came under the words, or who were approaching the age at which a pension under those words would be granted? The proposition was surely untenable. It was not one which any rational man on the other side of the House desired to see carried into effect. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway held that everybody at sixty-five years of age should receive a pension as a right. Most Members of the House did not agree that the undeserving or the rich should receive a pension, and, therefore, he did not appeal to hon. Members below the gangway to aid them in this matter. On that point, hon. Members below the gangway stood alone. But he appealed to the general mass of the House whether, when they were making what was admitted by its authors to be an experiment, and what everybody but its authors thought a rash experiment in the actual form in which they had adopted it, they ought not to have before them all the information, either financial or social, which could be given them. Surely it would be wise to take the precautions in Clause 1 which the Government themselves thought it prudent to take in Clause 3. He thought the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer must feel that supporters of the Amendment had a strong case. The Government had professed great anxiety to meet their critics halfway whenever a reasonable Amendment was suggested, and they were hardly likely to find in the course of the arguments a suggestion which, as far as he could see, was likely to do less harm to the scheme laid before the House.

Mr. ASQUITH said that they had now occupied over an hour on this Amendment. He was very loth to add even one minute to the length of the discussion, and he would not have done so save that he did not wish to appear disrespectful to the right hon. Gentleman. The Amendment was purely academic, and if the words were inserted in the Bill they would not make one iota of difference. In the first place it was of no use putting words into a Bill unless they served a specific purpose. He should deprecate very much the acceptance of these words because, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, in carrying out the grant of pensions, they were dealing in an experimental fashion with a subject many parts of which had not been sufficiently examined in this country. He believed that the House had affirmed the principle on the Second Reading that in the forefront of the measure there ought to be a clear indication that there was a right, a statutory right, to the old-age pension for all time to come. That was what the clause said. The title was to be given to everybody who fulfilled the statutory conditions; but it was a defeasible title if it came within the modifications which the House would have an opportunity of discussing. The suggestion that, by putting in the words "unless Parliament otherwise determine," they would in any way preserve the liberties of Parliament, or prevent persons entertaining unreasonable expectations, was to his mind wholly unfounded. The Government had deliberately put these words into the subsection of Clause 3 because they contemplated changes. It was only a temporary arrangement for a single year, or at the outside a couple of years.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked whether the right hon. Gentleman drew a distinction between the disqualifications in Clause 3 and the provisions of subsection 2 in Clause 1. Did he mean that the proviso lessening the allowance to people living together referred to a part of this scheme?

Mr. ASQUITH: Yes, but that was a matter for discussion. At present they did suggest, under Clause 2, that persons living together should be treated differently from persons living alone, for the present at any rate. The real ground for not accepting the Amendment was two-fold—first, that it was perfectly useless for the purpose in view; and, secondly, that it tended to suggest that the title given in the Bill to the aged poor to receive pensions from the State was a defeasible title.

*Mr. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said the Prime Minister had begun by saying that they should never put words into an Act of Parliament unless they had some specific purpose in so doing. Well, there was a specific purpose for the words proposed to be added in this case, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer almost in the very first words of his reply had made the admission that almost every one of these conditions might be altered, that many of them would be, and would not therefore be permanent. Then where was the distinction between the use of the words in the third clause, to which the right hon. Gentleman had just referred, and the words in reference to the conditions which appeared in Clause 1?

Sir F. BANBURY said he himself had put down an Amendment to insert: "And who is not subject to the disqualifications mentioned in this Act," but that had been ruled out as unnecessary. If that were so, then this qualification in Clause 1 was unnecessary, and the argument of the right hon. Gentleman fell to the ground.

Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said the Bill, if it came into operation, should do nothing to damage voluntary agencies which were the result of private effort, and were doing excellent work at the present time. They on that side of the House were not in favour of going blindly into a system for providing old-age pensions which would tend to undermine the best qualities of the people.

*Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said the Prime Minister's remarks had upset his conception of what the Bill meant. He said that the words proposed to be inserted would create a vested interest. In his opinion, this Bill was intended to created a vested interest. The Prime Minister seemed to think that the Amendment would not involve a breach of faith. Any alteration which a future Parliament might make he took it would concern those who came to the age of seventy, subsequently; but they could not alter a contract once made. What would become of the thousands of pensioners, soldiers, sailors and civil servants, if in granting their pensions they put the words "subject to any future Parliamentary action"? No future Parliamentary action could interfere with them unless it committed a breach of faith. No future Parliamentary action could deal with people who once came under the present Bill, and who could not be brought under any subsequent Act without a breach of faith being committed. Therefore, he was surprised to hear the Prime Minister say that the insertion of these words would not make any difference. Future Parliaments, of course, could alter conditions or anything else; but that could only affect those that came under the Act after the altered conditions were passed, and not those who came under the Act before the conditions were passed, and, therefore, he hoped the Government would not accept this Amendment. He spoke in the interests of poor people with whom the Act made a solemn contract, and there ought to be nothing that weakened that contract. So long as the conditions were fulfilled the poor people were entitled until they died to all the advantages the Act gave them.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 103; Noes, 341. (Division List No. 131.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt.Hn.SirAlex.F.
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt.Hn.Hugh O.
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt.Hn.Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt.Hn.A.J.(City Lond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beach, Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)

Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope,James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt.Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Col. Charles W.(Evesham
Long,Rt.Hn. Walter (Dublin,S)
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Nicholson,Wm. G. (Petersfield)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley GeorgeD.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid.)
Whitbread, Howard
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Bowles and Mr. Leverton Harris.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith,Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collings,Rt.Hn J.(Birmingh'm
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWmJ(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,CH(Sussex,EGrinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J.(Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies,M.Vaughan-(Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol,S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar,Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar,Sir J.A.(Inverness-sh.)
Dickenson,W.H(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, SirT. (Renfrew,W
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn Sir W.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget

Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E)
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H. (Cheshire, Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen's Co.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncaster
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs., Leek)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Tomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Willson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

SIR F. BANBURY, in moving to omit the words "under the Act," said the Prime Minister had told them that it was wrong to put in words which were both meaningless and useless. The words they were discussing were meaningless and useless because they were governed by the words laid down in line 6. It was, therefore, unnecessary to insert them again at this point. He would like to know if the Prime Minister was willing to accept this simple drafting Amendment in order to make the words clear.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 8, to leave out the words 'under this Act.'"—*Sir F. Banbury.*

Question proposed "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) said that the Act might possibly be clear enough without those words, but there was no reason why they should not remain in to make it more clear.

MR. WALTER LONG said the Attorney-General had placed them in a difficulty. When it was suggested that words should be inserted to make the meaning clear the Prime Minister said that nothing could be worse than the insertion of unnecessary words. Now the Attorney-General told them that although the words were unnecessary they ought to be retained to make the meaning clear.

SIR W. ROBSON said he did not say the words were unnecessary. His point was that they were useful words.

MR. WALTER LONG said the Government could not complain if time was taken up upon Amendments which obviously might have been accepted without causing any difficulty. The grounds for resisting this Amendment were no stronger than in the case of the last Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY said he understood the Attorney-General to say that the words which he wished to strike out were unnecessary, and that the clause would read just as well without them as with them.

SIR W. ROBSON said he did not say that. What he said was that on the whole it was better to leave the words in.

LORD R. CECIL said the meaning of the clause was perfectly clear without those words. What other meaning could the words have but a pension "under this Act" and yet the Government inserted those words. The Government were anxious to make in this clause a definite, clear, and all-embracing statement of the principle, namely, that everybody was entitled to a pension for ever under certain conditions, not under this Act. They desired to lay that down emphatically, and did not wish to limit it at all. If the words "under this Act" were retained that placed a limit on the pension, and if any future Act came along then the pensioners would not be entitled to receive their pension. Was that the intention of the Government?

SIR F. BANBURY said he would not press his Amendment. He would prefer to keep the words in after what his noble friend had said.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) moved to leave out the words "so long as those conditions continue to be fulfilled." He said he was not willing that these pensions, when given, should be considered as a mere extension of Poor Law relief. If they should not have a contributory system, he was in favour of all those restrictions being done away with, because they tended to lower the self-respect of the citizen, and would put the whole community under a pressure of inspectorship and examination which would make life almost intolerable to many citizens. They wanted all those unpleasant inquiries into the past stopped. He desired to do away with all those conditions except that which laid down twenty years as the qualification for the naturalised British subject. If the words he was moving to omit remained in the section they would be tying their hands for the future. He desired to appeal especially to hon. Members below the gangway to notice the full effect of what they were doing by retaining these words. To lay down a condition that twenty years was a necessary period for a naturalised British citizen was a condition which they could not go back upon once it was established, but if they put in words providing that there were to be continual researches into the character of the applicants for old-age pensions, their income and their power of living otherwise, all those were necessary conditions in regard to which they would have to inquire if the words quoted "continue to be fulfilled" were retained. By omitting those words they would at once remove all those restrictions. He strongly objected to subjecting the recipients of pensions to constant inquiries, and that was precisely what would happen if they allowed those words to remain in the Bill. He contended that the words were not in the least necessary, and surely the Attorney-General would admit that if he examined the point closely. If they insisted upon retaining those words they could not possibly cut out those conditions, and the result would be continual inquiry and inspection. He invited hon. Members to realise how they were tying their hands by allowing the words to remain. He begged to move the Amendment standing in his name.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, lines 8 and 9, to leave out the words 'so long as those conditions continue to be fulfilled and.'"—(*Sir Henry Craik.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

SIR W. ROBSON said the pensions proposed to be given under the Act were conditional, and naturally should only be enjoyed so long as the conditions were fulfilled. If a person after reaching the age of seventy received, by a legacy or by some stroke of good fortune, a considerable accession to his income, it was clearly not desirable that he should go on receiving his pension while many others not so well off received no pension. There were other disqualifications to consider, as, for instance, if a man became a lunatic and became a charge on public funds. It was not the view of the Government that the conditions being once fulfilled were to be taken as being always fulfilled.

SIR F. BANBURY said he did not approve of the scheme proposed in the Bill; he approved of a contributory scheme. He did not approve of any scheme which would compel the community to pay pensions to the unthrifty. If the Amendment of his hon. friend were carried, that result would follow, and, therefore, he was prepared to support with his voice and vote the Party opposite. The Attorney-General had referred to the possibility of a pensioner becoming a lunatic and continuing to draw his pension after he had become a charge on public funds, but the hon. and learned Gentleman forgot that under this Bill as it stood such a person would no longer be entitled to a pension. Under the Amendment he would still be entitled to his pension.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester) said that these old-age pensions should be as a badge of honour to the industrial poor in their old age, but that badge could not be worn unless there was some discrimination between the deserving poor and the wastrel. The very grievance of the present Poor Law system was the lack of sufficient classification to distinguish between the poor deserving individual and the individual of bad character who had neglected opportunities. If the Amendment was pressed to a division he should certainly support the Government.

SIR HENRY CRAIK said he had no wish to press the Amendment to a division. He asked leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. BOWLES moved to insert the words "and remains in the United Kingdom." Unless such a condition were added a man over seventy years of age might leave the country for an indefinite length of time, and returning receive the sum accumulated week by week. He could not conceive that that was the intention of the Government. The Amendment seemed to him to be one in the interest of the scheme itself, and he trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept it.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 9, after the word 'he,' to insert the words 'remains in the United Kingdom and.'"—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it would not be reasonable that a man should continue to receive his pension after he had left the country. He thought the Amendment would be dealt with under the regulations provided for in Clause 2, but he would consider the point if the hon. Member would now withdraw the Amendment.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN did not know what consideration the right hon. Gentleman had given to this or on what grounds he considered the Amendment reasonable. He was not satisfied that it was a reasonable provision. He would like to know on what grounds absence from the country was to disqualify a man from getting his pension. Would a man become disqualified if he left the country at all, or how long might he be away? Why, if a man visited relations abroad or in the Colonies, should he forfeit his pension? Why, indeed, should his right be forfeited if, having fulfilled the conditions, he decided to join his son established in Australia, Canada, or elsewhere? Pensions were not to be awarded to save the poor rates, but as recognition of work done during a working life, and, having fulfilled the conditions for receiving a pension, why should not a man spend the remaining years of his life after seventy with his family in another part of the British Empire? He could not see why that man should not do so, and take his pension with him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not attempt to argue the question at all. He thought a case ought to be shown for making absence from the country a disqualification before they debarred a man from enjoying his pension wherever he liked to go.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said that the Amendment hastily conceived—perhaps too hastily—appeared to be based on the essential fallacy of protection for home industries. If pensions were to be given as a right the pensioner ought to be allowed to live where he chose.

*MR. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston) said that he understood that under the Bill as drawn a pensioner who took up his residence abroad would lose his pension. That was perfectly right. But the effect of this Amendment would be that if the pensioner went abroad for a few weeks for a special purpose, or to see his relations, he would lose his pension during his absence. He did not see why that should be the case.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that he quite accepted the hon. Gentleman's interpretation of the point. It was perfectly clear from subsection (2) of Clause 2. It might be right that the point should have been raised, although it was a very narrow one; but it was not germane to the particular clause now under discussion, and he did not intend to go beyond that. If a pensioner went to the South of France on his 5s. pension and intended to return, he would not be disqualified on his return from continuing to receive his pension. But let them take the case put by the right hon. Gentleman, of a man who quitted this country altogether and went to the United States——

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I said within the British Empire.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not suppose that a man who left this country altogether with his family, not intending to return but to settle elsewhere, would have his pension continued. If the right hon. Gentleman read subsection (2) of Clause 2 he would see that that case was specially provided for.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said he thought that the right hon. Gentleman was in a dilemma. He and the Government had told the Committee that by the first subsection they were laying down a basic principle on which the whole Bill proceeded. Let the Committee understand that his hon. friend's Amendment did really raise a point on which the Committee ought to make up its mind. In the vague discussion on the Second Reading, when they did not always come to close quarters and rhetoric was more in order than on latter stages of a Bill, hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House described the pension which the Government were going to give as a right, and as being due to persons who had worked for the community for seventy years of their life. Was that the principle of the Bill or was it not? If it was, the Government were bound to reject the Amendment of his hon. friend and the modified form of the Amendment suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was perfectly impossible to say that the pensioner had earned the right to 5s. a week and that that right was to be forfeited if he did not live within the four seas. But the right hon. Gentleman could not found an argument like that if the pension was to be regarded as a general portion of our Poor Law relief. He quite agreed that it would not do to give poor relief to a person living abroad. But if the pension they were giving away was analogous to a Civil Service pension, then a Civil servant did not forfeit his pension because he went abroad to live. One of the great difficulties everybody saw in dealing with those cases of persons over seventy years of age was that very often they had no near relations to live with. It was impossible for them to live alone and the Bill made no provision for those persons to live anywhere except in the poorhouse infirmary. But it might be that there were cases, relatively uncommon it was true, where such pensioners had relations living abroad, who were themselves poor but who would be glad to receive the pensioner into their family if he had an income of 5s. a week, but who could not otherwise receive them. It might be said that those cases were rare; but if the Government took up that line they might have information at their disposal which would include it in the broad principle of this clause. He, however, wished the Government to tell the Committee what was the logical basis of their Bill. An old man who had led a respectable and laborious life here ought not to be deprived of his pension if he went to live with his relatives in the circumstances he had stated. On the other hand if they accepted the analogy that the pension was in the nature of poor relief then that relief should not be received outside the United Kingdom.

Sir F. CAWLEY (Lancashire, Prestwich) hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not trouble to consider the Amendment at all. If an old man had earned his pension, as they all said that he had at seventy years of age, then he ought to have his pension whatever part of the world he went to. It was rather an invidious thing to say that a man who wanted to go out to America to live with his relations ought not to have his pension.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said he would like to mention the case of a man who might choose to go and live in New Zealand. He understood that in New Zealand pensions were universal. [Cries of "No, no."]

Mr. ASQUITH: They are much more stringent there than in our Bill.

Earl WINTERTON said that supposing a man went to New Zealand at the age of seventy and resided there for five years he would be entitled to a pension. [Cries of "No, no."] He believed the period was five years.

Mr. ASQUITH: No, twenty-five.

Earl WINTERTON, continuing, said that that to some extent disposed of his point. However, he understood that in New Zealand the inhabitants were noted for the length of their lives, and so a man might go there at the age of seventy and live till he was ninety-five and then get a pension. But there was another point, and that was the case of the alien who resided in this country for twenty years. He was, perhaps, not a very desirable citizen, but he might manage to keep within the clauses of the Bill as regarded pensions, and as soon as he received a pension at the age of seventy he might leave the country and go back to Poland. He did not consider that under these circumstances he ought to receive a pension, and therefore he thought the question of a pensioner leaving the country ought to be fully discussed, and that they ought to know from the Government exactly what they proposed in the matter. If he might say so he did not think the arguments of his right hon. friend the Member for East Worcestershire were conclusive, because the chances of a man of seventy receiving a pension and going abroad were, to say the least, slender, and he did not believe that in one case in a thousand would a man go to reside abroad with his family. He suggested to the Government they should tell the House exactly what their policy was on the question of a pensioner going to reside abroad with relatives or friends. He most strongly disapproved of pensions being given to such men as Polish Jews coming to England at the age of fifty and leaving at the age of seventy. He had no doubt the argument did not appeal so much to hon. Members opposite, but it did appeal to those on his side of the House who supported the principle of the Aliens Bill.

Mr. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes) asked the consideration of the Government in the matter of pensions to fishermen, who were a long-lived race and were often able to go to sea after they were seventy years of age. It was obvious that a man under those circumstances should not be deprived of his pension because he was at sea.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said that a very deserving class of Government pensioners would view the principle of the Amendment with very considerable alarm. He, however, did not think that a pensioner who got 5s. a week would go to the south of France for his health or to Germany to have his eyes attended to. He wanted to ask, if the Amendment were accepted, would it in principle apply to pensioners who had earned their pensions for military or civil service under the Crown. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not give way on this point too readily. It was a concession which might prove *pessimi exempli*, and after all once concede that these allowances were pensions, and they naturally followed the same line as other pensions, which might eventually be affected.

Sir F. BANBURY said, so far as he could see, it was not necessary to ask the Committee to accept this Amendment. As he read the Bill, it already provided for this point. [Cries of "Divide."] If hon. Gentlemen who shouted "Divide" would only read the Bill they would see that so long as the conditions continued to be fulfilled a man had a right to a pension. If he was out of the United Kingdom the conditions could not be fulfilled, and he would lose his pension. He regretted his right hon. friend had taken the course he had, but, at the same time, he believed the Amendment was absolutely useless, because the Bill provided for the object his hon. friend had in view.

Mr. BOWLES disclaimed any desire to put the Committee to the trouble of a division. If he understood clearly from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government agreed with the object of the Amendment, as he did understand, and intended that that object should be carried out, he was content. The object was very simple. If a man became entitled to a pension under this Bill, it was already provided that if he went away he should not be deprived of it when he came back. What he wanted to know was whether he would continue to receive the pension during the time he was away, wherever he might be. What the hon. Baronet said was quite true. There was a reference to residence in the United Kingdom in Clause 2 of the Bill, but that was only a qualifying condition. What he wished to know was whether the Government intended and desired that a person having fulfilled all conditions and having escaped all disqualifications and become entitled to a pension, should be allowed to go abroad for an indefinite time under any circumstances and have his pension every week as a right. He understood the Government did not intend that.

It would, he thought, be a very heavy charge on the taxpayers of this country. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer shared the view that that should be rendered impossible, he would not put the Committee to the trouble of a division. On the other hand if the right hon. Gentleman had been intimidated by his hon. friends behind him, he would have no alternative but to divide the House.

MR. HAROLD COX asked whether the Attorney-General would explain to the Committee whether the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London was right in his reading of the Bill. If this Bill disqualified a man from drawing his pension because he went to live in New Zealand the Committee certainly ought to know it. If the pension was given as a right, a right that every person could insist on, then a man should also have a right to live where he liked.

SIR W. ROBSON said that Clause 2, subsection 2 laid down, as a statutory condition for getting a pension, that the candidate should have had his residence, as defined by regulations under the Act, in the United Kingdom for a period of at least twenty years up to the date of the receipt of any sum on account of a pension. It said nothing about what he might or might not do after he got his pension. That was a matter which was covered by the Amendment.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, referring to the words "up to the date of the receipt of any sum on account of a pension," asked the Attorney-General whether a person who had received his first weekly payment and had then left the country, temporarily, would not, by going away, have broken his twenty years' residence and have destroyed his qualification to receive any subsequent grant. The hon. and learned Gentleman did not deal with those words at all.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had no desire to bring the debate to a premature conclusion, but he would like to know whether at this stage of the proceedings it was competent for the Committee to discuss the interpretation of Clause 2.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN pointed out that the defence against the acceptance of this Amendment was that its purpose was covered by Clause 2. There seemed to be some doubt about that, and he would like to know from the Attorney-General whether that was so or not.

**THE CHAIRMAN* said that when he first saw the Amendment on the Paper he had grave doubts whether he should allow it at all at this point. If earlier in the debate he had been asked if Clause 2, subsection (2), covered the point he should have replied in the affirmative. But, after what he had heard of the discussion, and the different views which had been expressed by those competent to give an opinion, he was less certain. As to the question of the Chancellor of the Exchequer he thought it was impossible to dissever a discussion of the meaning of Clause 2 from the discussion of the Amendment. But he must point out that, when the question was settled by a division on the Amendment, it could not be discussed all over again on Clause 2, subsection (2).

MR. CLAVELL SALTER (Hants, Basingstoke) said the importance of the Amendment would no doubt be realised by hon. Members below the gangway. He did not assert that the view of the Attorney-General was wrong, but it was an extremely arguable question whether the Bill as it stood did not make continued residence in this country within the meaning of the Act a continuing condition of the receipt of one of these pensions. It would hardly be denied that a man who received from the Post Office 5s. each week would receive that money on account of pension. If that was so, it would be the duty of those who were charged with these functions to see that that man had been in residence in England for the last twenty years. Unless it was clearly settled hon. Members below the gangway might find themselves exceedingly disappointed.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said that in view of the uncertainty which now existed in regard to this matter he would like to know whether it was in order to do so, and if it were, he would give notice now to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he would put down an Amendment to Clause 2 that would definitely raise this point. His Amendment would be to delete the word "any" and substitute the word "first."

*THE CHAIRMAN said that if this Amendment was dealt with in the negative, that question could certainly be raised. He could not, however, allow the whole of this question to be discussed all over again.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) asked whether this Amendment was not entirely out of order in view of the Chairman's earlier ruling that they could not discuss any of the conditions of an old-age pension.

*THE CHAIRMAN said that he had already explained that it was because he had been originally in some doubt on the question of whether the point was meant to be covered by Clause 2 that he allowed the discussion.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said they were told by the Chairman's ruling that this most important question could not be discussed again. They were therefore entitled to know aye or no what was the position of the Government. Did they mean the Bill to be, as he read it, merely an extension of the present system of outdoor relief? If that was so, then residence within the United Kingdom was clearly a condition precedent to its receipt. His view was that that was the only possible construction which could be put on the words. If that was not the intention of the Government, they should make it perfectly clear to the Committee that they meant this sum of money to be payable even in the case of the Polish Jew. The qualifying age was not fixed for ever, and might be reduced at a subsequent stage to a point very much below that at which it had been settled. In Clause 2 the statutory condition was laid down that the person to receive a pension must have been at least twenty years a British subject, and had his residence in the United Kingdom under regulations provided by the Act. He was to continue to receive the pension so long as he fulfilled the conditions laid down. But if a man ceased to be a British subject after the age of sixty, sixty-five, or seventy, or whatever age was fixed, surely those conditions would not continue, in those circumstances, to be fulfilled. They ought to know distinctly, once for all, what construction the Government really put upon the Bill as it stood.

MR. LUTTRELL (Devonshire, Tavistock) said they had before them a very clear point indeed. There was an Amendment which the Government might either accept or refuse. Although the point was clear, he must own that the answer of the Government was not so clear as he thought it ought to be. What he wanted to know was whether the Government meant that a man who was entitled to pension should be able to receive that pension if he went abroad. He had not heard a definite answer to that point.

LORD R. CECIL said his hon. friend had moved an Amendment, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer got up and said the Government were entirely in favour of it, but they believed that the purpose of that Amendment was carried out by Clause 2, subsection (2), and the debate went on. Then the Attorney-General got up a little later and made a series of observations on the Amendment.

SIR W. ROBSON said he was answering a simple question, and he replied in the shortest possible terms. He did not even purport to make a speech on either the clause or the Amendment, and when the noble Lord said he had made a series of observations, his reply was that he had done nothing of the kind. He had confined his observations to simply answering the question put to him.

LORD R. CECIL said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the Amendment was already covered by subsection (2) of Section 2, and there was a great deal to be said from the right hon. Gentleman's view. But the

Attorney-General had got up and said—"Oh, no, subsection (2) of Section 2 means only that you have been in residence for twenty years up to the date of the receipt of the first sum on account of pension. Once that condition is fulfilled then it does not matter what you do." He confessed that seemed to him a very startling construction of the Bill in view of the proposition that the conditions had to continue to be fulfilled. He had risen to call attention to the situation in which they were placed by the course the Government had adopted. Everybody knew that Clause 2, subsection (2), would not be discussed in that House at all, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, seeing the difficulty about that, was very anxious to get the whole of the discussion ruled out at this stage, because he knew that they could not take it on any other. That was the position in which they were always placed under the closure. He trusted that hon. Members below the gangway who were so ready to vote for the guillotine, and so ready to impose restrictions on any minority except themselves, would take this instance as a good object-lesson of the result of voting for the guillotine. As to the Amendment, personally he thought there was a good deal to be said in favour of it. But a much more important thing was what the Government were going to say as to the real meaning of their Bill.

MR. WALTER LONG said it was almost incredible that they were to have no answer to the point which had been put with absolute clearness by the hon. Member for Tavistock. The hon Member had put in the simplest form the question raised by the Amendment of his hon. friend. He appealed to all who heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech whether it was not an acceptance of the principle, with the usual reservation always and properly made by the Government as to the language to be finally adopted. The Attorney-General had subsequently pointed to the object of Clause 2. The case had been put of the man who got a pension, and afterwards went to join his family abroad. It was possible there might be some exception in that particular case. All they had asked was whether the Government looked upon the pension as an inalienable right, enabling a man, once he had got it, to go to any part of the world. Did the Government intend that, if a foreigner came over to this country at the age of about forty years, and then, after a residence of twenty years, got pension, he might go abroad again and take his pension, spending the money of British taxpayers and ratepayers in other lands? Would the Government tell the Committee their mind on the subject? The Government had been troubled by none of the difficulties which troubled others; would they, therefore, state in a few words what was their policy? Were these pensions to be taken to all parts of the world as an inalienable right, or was it intended that there should be certain restrictions, and if so what were those restrictions to be?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had not risen because he knew perfectly well from experience that an explanation from the Treasury Bench as a rule prolonged discussion. That was the experience of any Government; as a rule two or three speeches followed upon a Government explanation. He thought he had made the position clear that the pension was to be payable under practically the same conditions as had been established in New Zealand and in the Colonies, namely that the pensioner received his pension so long as he resided in the Colony. The Government were under the impression that that was the effect of Clause 2. If it was not, then when they came to Clause 2, the noble Lord might be able to give them more assistance than he had done that afternoon. At any rate it would not be the fault of the Government if they did not reach Clause 2. For three hours they had now been debating a number of purely drafting Amendments, and the present was a drafting Amendment. It was a question of interpretation, and a question of interpretation on a clause which they had not yet reached. The intention of the Government was perfectly clear. They wanted to establish the same position as had been established in regard to Colonial pensioners, that a man received the pension so long as he resided in the country. He might go for a few weeks fishing at the Dogger Bank or to the South of France for a few months, but still he would be a resident here according to the legal meaning of "resident." That was all that could be adopted at the present stage. That was the intention of the Government, and he was sorry if he had not made it clear.

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.) asked whether if the man who went to the Dogger Bank fishing for a few weeks, or to the South of France for a few months, died while he was away, in that event his widow would be entitled to the arrears of pension?

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 101; Noes, 376. (Division List No. 132.)

AYES.

Acland Hood, Rt Hn.Sir Alex.F
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, RtHn. A.J.(City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn.G Winchester
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E.F. (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James(Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred. Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hardy, Laurence(Kent, Ashf'rd
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, W. Bateman(Somerset, N
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt.Hon.Sir John H.
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Col. Charles W.(Evesham)
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter (Dublin, S)
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parkes, Ebenezer
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F.E.(Liverpool, Walton)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Bowles and Earl Winterton.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHnSirJ.T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Causton, Rt.Hn.Richard Knight
Cave, George

Mr Lloyd-George.

Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chamberlain,RtHn.J.A (Worc.
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,SirWm. J.(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(MontgomeryCo.)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M.Vaughan- Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N.
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt.Hn.HerbertJohn
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gretton, John
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,RtHn.SirW. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie,J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey,W.E. (Derbyshire,N.E
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hills, J. W.
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones,Sir D.Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb,Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil(St. Pancras,E.
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah(Down,S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A.(Queen'sCo.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William ;
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray,Capt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly,James(Roscommon,N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')

Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J W. H. (Somerset, F
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters;
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) asked on a point of order, the House having voted, as he understood, against continued residence in the United Kingdom being a condition of accepting a pension, whether that did not automatically carry with it the reconstruction of subsection (2) of Clause 2. He asked the question because he did not think there was much chance of reaching that subsection, and he thought it ought to be settled now.

*THE CHAIRMAN said they must wait until they did reach that subsection.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) asked if it would be possible to raise a point of order, when the guillotine fell, as to some necessary modification of a clause which had not then been reached, but which modification was necessary under the decision already taken.

*THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham) said the Amendment in his name raised the question of the sliding scale, but as he understood this was not a convenient method of raising the subject he did not propose to move.

*THE CHAIRMAN said the next Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City (to insert the words "until Parliament otherwise determine") raised a question which had already been discussed.

SIR F. BANBURY said the way the question was raised by his Amendment was entirely different, because they had not decided what the amount of the pension was going to be.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I think that for all practical purposes this point has already been discussed, and I cannot therefore allow it to be reopened. I call upon the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Ilkeston to move his Amendment.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) asked if the moving of this Amendment would make it impossible for the Committee to discuss the sliding scale.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly not. The sliding scale can be discussed later, and there are Amendments upon it.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked if it would not be possible to put the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite in such a way that his noble friend could subsequently move his Amendment.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not think the decision upon this Amendment would preclude the House from discussing the sliding scale.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The noble Lord's Amendment comes one word later, but I am strongly of opinion that the most convenient time for raising this question will be in the Amendment to leave out the words "at the rate of 5s. a week."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said his noble friend's Amendment was not merely raising the abstract question of the sliding scale, but it was asking the Committee to consider a carefully thought out plan.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, moved to alter the provision that "an old-age pension under this Act shall be at the rate of five shillings a week" to "shall not exceed five shillings a week." He moved the Amendment, he explained, to avoid what would otherwise be an abrupt and brutal line of demarcation. To give a man who had 9s. 10d. a week a pension of 5s. a week, while a man who had 10s. 2d. a week got nothing, seemed to be a very great injustice. He thought this might be avoided by the Government having power to vary the amount of the pension according to the income of the recipient. His Amendment would get rid of the hard and fast line which it was very difficult to draw without causing a good deal of injustice. The Committee of 1899 pointed out the difficulty of having an abrupt line of demarcation as to where a pension should be given or where it should not be given. If the Government were inclined to save money they might take power by words such as he recommended in the Amendment to vary the pension or to lessen it, giving a man who had already an income of 6s. or 7s. a week a smaller sum than a man who had only 5s. In that way they would take away the sense of injustice, and the Government would be saved a considerable sum of money. He thought the Government might, by going into this scheme or some such other scheme as might be moved subsequently, save enough money to do away with a very objectionable clause which lessened the pension of persons living together, a provision it was very difficult to justify. If he were a poor man he would feel a sense of injustice under the hard and fast rule. He had received many letters from people with incomes of just over 10s. a week complaining of the injustice. He would by no means suggest that the pension should be over 5s. a week, because he had no right to add to the expenditure of the Exchequer, which would be in the hands of the Government; still, he thought the qualification he suggested would give greater elasticity, make the Bill more popular and less unkind to many who were excluded by the line of the income, and add to the reputation of the Government for generosity and treatment of the poor.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 11, to leave out the words 'be at the rate of,' and to insert the words 'not exceed.'"—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'be' stand part of the clause."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said his right hon. friend sought to raise the question of the sliding scale on this Amendment. He did not mind upon which Amendment it was raised, but it was not advisable to raise the question twice over. He thought the best place to raise it would be on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Worcester, but in this matter he was entirely in the hands of the Opposition.

MR. WALTER LONG agreed that it would be much more convenient to take the discussion of this question on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Worcester or on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Maidstone. The two Amendments were identical in the proposal made in regard to the plan, but they differed in regard to the schedule and the scale to be paid.

Amendment negatived.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) moved to leave out the words "at the rate of 5s. a week," and to insert in their place "paid at the rate set forth in the schedule to this Act." He said the Amendment left it open to the House to decide whether there should be a hard and fast limit or a sliding scale. In view of the amount of money at the disposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, a scheme of this kind would be wiser and far more acceptable to the people of the country than the one proposed in the Bill. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, lines 11 and 12, to leave out the words 'at the rate of five shillings a week,' and insert the words 'paid at the rates set forth in the schedule to this Act.'"—(*Viscount Castlereagh.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said it was most essential they should have a thorough discussion of the question whether there was to be a fixed pension of 5s. a week or 5s. a week in some cases and only 1s. a week in others—a proposition which seemed to find favour with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had no doubt that had this suggestion been contained in the Bill originally, a good deal could have been said for it, but there was this unfortunate fact about the whole business, that a pension had been suggested and hopes had been raised that those with incomes of not more than 10s. a week would be entitled to 5s. a week. If either of the schedules suggested was placed in the Bill, instead of a pension of 5s. a week persons with an income of 10s. a week would only get 3s. a week. Under these circumstances, so far as he was concerned, he most strenuously resisted the suggestion. The Government having stated its policy to the House, speeches having been delivered by the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer holding out hopes of a 5s. pension, he thought that, in spite of all the anomalies that a hard and fast rule might create, they would be doing a positive injustice to the people whose hopes had been raised by the statements of representatives of the Government. Therefore, under no circumstances could he vote for a sliding scale which would prevent those who had been promised a 5s. pension obtaining it. He could quite understand, if the Bill was adopted as it stood, a person with 11s. a week getting nothing, and a person with 10s. a week getting 5s., making the person with 10s. 4s. a week better off than the more thrifty person. That was an anomaly, but it should have been considered and decided before the Bill was presented. If a sliding scale principle was to be adopted the only correct and fair way was to have a sliding scale from 10s. upwards, and not downwards; so that a man with an income of 11s. would be entitled to a 4s. pension, and one with 12s. to a 3s. pension. He could understand the injustice and peculiarity of the anomalies that must accrue from the Bill as it stood, but having held out these hopes to the country at bye-elections and elsewhere the Government should not withdraw from them. He therefore opposed the proposal for a sliding scale, believing it would be a positive injury, and he complained most severely of the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer having apparently receded from their original position.

*MR. GOULDING thought that the hon. Member below the gangway had exaggerated what the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated on the Second Reading of the measure. He understood from the Prime Minister that the Government had considered both schemes—namely, a sliding scale and a fixed scheme—and that they had no strong views upon the matter, but that when it came to be discussed in the House they would practically leave it to the House to decide the question. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was a little more specific than that. He ventured to say to hon. Gentlemen that they were not there to consider promises which had been made outside. They were considering the beginning of a great old-age pension scheme, and what they wanted to do was to encourage thrift and not to discourage it. The experience of all who had to do with old-age pensions pointed practically to a sliding scale, and therefore if they wanted a workable proposal they must adopt such a scale. He did not see how they were going to determine a fixed limit of 10s. without doing a great injustice to people who had exercised thrift, and creating a feeling in their minds that wrong had been done to them. He could not think how they could go to any man and say: "You have a fraction of 1d. per week above 10s., therefore you can have 5s. a week pension," and to the man who had been slightly more thrifty: "You have got 10s. 3d. a week, therefore we can give you nothing." The result would be that the less thrifty man would have an income of 15s. a week including a pension. There was another important matter. Surely those who belonged to friendly societies and the great trade unions who had put aside for superannuation when earning a wage, were not going to be penalised for their thrift? With the desire to meet the views of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had said that the money he had set apart for pensions this year must not be exceeded, he had prepared a schedule taking 13s. per week as the maximum income, and proposing a sliding scale beginning with the full 5s. pension when the average weekly income was 8s., and going upwards by 1s. in the weekly income, and downwards by 1s. in the pension. This was a great experiment, and he gave full and ample credit to the Government for their action in the matter, but he did not want to see the scheme started except on a generous basis which could be modified in future. He hoped the Government would see their way to consider his scheme. He knew that there were many both inside and outside the House who objected to a sliding scale, because they considered that it would involve inquisition; but there would be no inquisition as regarded character, but simply as regarded means. In New Zealand and Australia the inquiry was made in open court as to a man's means, and there had never been a whisper raised as to its inquisitorial character, so that hon. Members need not be deterred from voting for a sliding scale on that ground. He took it for granted that the vast majority of those who claimed a pension would claim the full 5s. per week; that it would be only a small minority who would wish a less amount. Their difficulty would not be great; all they would have to say was that they belonged to a friendly society or a trade union, that they drew 10s. or 11s. from their union or society, and that they wanted the balance. He could not support the schedule suggested by the noble Lord the Member for Maidstone, because he did not want to see the maximum of 5s. enlarged, unless it were enlarged in a very different way from that proposed.

*MR. WHITEHEAD (Essex, S.E.) said he wished to support the sliding scale because he thought it would remove the serious dangers which were incidental to a hard and fast line and which would create a sense of injustice, encourage fraud, discourage thrift, and cause a reduction in wages. It would create a sense of injustice, because if a man who had been able by thrift and economy to secure for himself 10s. a week, received as a gift or a bounty from the State another 5s. a week, while another man who had been equally thrifty and industrious and had saved for himself 10s. 1d. a week or 10s. 2d. would not receive any pension at all, that would create a feeling of injustice, not only in the mind of the man who received no recognition but in the mind of his neighbours. Another point in favour of the sliding scale was that the good faith of the claimant was a very potent factor in this matter; and if a man was near the border line of 10s. there would be a very great temptation indeed to dishonesty in stating the amount of his income in order to obtain the extra 5s. of the pension, and because of the feeling of injustice there would be no longer that restraint which wholesome public opinion or that of his friends usually exercised to prevent him evading the conditions laid down in the Act. A hard and fast line would therefore be a great incentive to a want of public integrity on the part of those who wanted to come within the limits of this scheme. A hard and fast line would discourage thrift, because, if a man had an income below 10s. he would get all the benefit of the pension, whereas the man, who by industry and economy had secured an income between 10s. and 15s. would be absolutely penalised for his thrift. A sliding scale would at least get rid of any penalty on thrift. Again, the hard and fast line would have an unfortunate effect upon the wages of the aged, especially in the agricultural districts. An agricultural labourer over seventy years of age might not, perhaps, be as fully competent for his work as in former days, and might be worth something less than 15s. a week in wages. The hard and fast line would be an inducement to him to accept even something less than 10s. a week in wages in order that he might come within the pension scheme and get 5s. a week in addition. There would also be the tendency of the employer to give the lowest wage possible. Here they would have two parties to a contract, both desirous for their own purposes of reducing the wages down to 10s. Those considerations had weighed with him in pressing on the Government the desirability of having a sliding scale. He had originally placed on the Paper a proviso for graduating the income from 10s. up to 15s. a week, but after the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the representatives of the friendly societies the other day, he did not feel it was practicable to press the Government further for any greatly increased expenditure which such graduation from 10s. upwards would involve; and it now seemed to him that if they were to have a sliding scale at all it would have to be on the lines of the expenditure indicated in the Bill as drafted, and in a form which the Government themselves would lay down. Therefore, instead of taking 10s. as a minimum point above which the sliding scale should operate, he had now put down on the Paper a Schedule similar in general lines to that of the hon. Member for Worcestershire and took 10s. as the central point, and graduated below and above it, forming a scale which seemed to involve a somewhat similar expense to the Government proposals. In only one principle of importance did his scale differ from that of the hon. Member, and that was in order to make it conform with that part of the Government scheme which involved a differentiation of pensions as between persons living alone, and where two or three lived together. He did not himself like that difference of treatment; but it was desirable that the scale should conform to the general condition laid down in the Bill, and therefore his scale involved two scales which provided 5s. in the one case, and a reduced pension when two or more persons were living together, and in the case of each scale graduated from a central point. He would not now go into the details, but would content himself with supporting the principle of a sliding scale and he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would accept it.

*Mr. CHIOZZA-MONEY said the Committee would sympathise with the two hon. Members in their endeavour to remove the anomalies and hardships which arose from the fixed income limit, and he thought the sliding scale was an exceedingly attractive way to get over the difficulty. He, however, hoped that nothing would be done to increase the number of disappointed people in connection with the Bill. He reminded the Committee that there were a great number of people with less than 10s. a week who had made up their minds that they were going to receive a pension, and that this proposal added to the number of poor aged people who were to benefit by this Bill. By this proposal not only would they be throwing work upon the pensions committee which they would find in practice impossible to carry out, but they would be casting a very strong temptation in their way to conceal their income. He asked the Committee to look carefully at the extraordinary provisions of Clause 4 and to ask themselves how a pension committee would be able to decide fine differences in small incomes under such provisions. He would like no limit at all. He would like the universal citizen-right pension claimable by everybody over a certain age; but if the House came to the conclusion that it could not afford it, let it deal with the matter in a sensible, businesslike way by raising the limit of income. By every shilling they raised the limit of income they cancelled hardship. Suppose the limit of income was £1, the man who had 21s. a week would not get a pension, the man with 19s. would. Therefore the man who had 19s. with a pension would have 24s., whilst the other man would only have 21s. But when they took the lower scale the hardship was much greater. The man with 9s. a week would receive 5s., and bring up his income to 14s. whereas the man with 11s. 6d. would get nothing. The difficulty in the matter was the expense, but he believed the Committee could embark upon the small additional expenditure required with with a light heart in view of the resources of the United Kingdom.

MR. GOOCH (Bath) said there were really two questions before the Committee—first, the principle of a sliding scale with which everybody or at least the great majority of the Committee would agree, and, secondly, the limited sliding scale which the Government had in view, which was a very different thing. It was quite clear that the man with 10s. a week was to get a pension, and that the man with 10s. 6d. was not. It was also clear that if they went below the 10s. upon the Government plan it would cause wide disappointment in the country. It was a choice of evils. They would be pleased if the Government could see its way to recede from the position taken up on the Second Reading in ruling out any increase whatever of the total sum. If the Government stuck to their resolution not to provide any more money under a sliding scale than under a hard-and-fast rule, it would be more just to provide a sliding scale though he thought it would be less popular in the country. He would, therefore, have to support the sliding scale.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said that the Government by the Bill had excited the hope that those who were eligible for the pension would receive no less than 5s., and yet he understood there was a disposition, in the event of the Amendment being carried, to accept a sliding scale that would place thousands of people in a position inferior to that stated in the Bill. Against such a policy the Labour Party would protest most emphatically. This question had been before the country and speeches had been made by responsible Ministers in favour of old-age pensions, but no single Member of the Government had ventured on a public platform to express himself in favour of a sliding scale or of any scheme which involved a pension of less than 5s. per week. If when the aged poor arrived at an age when they could no longer support themselves the State was going to recognise their right to a pension, it was unfair for the Government to excite a hope in the breasts of these aged people that they would get 5s., and finally disappoint them by accepting an Amendment by which a man would get not 5s., but it might be 1s., 2s., or 3s. a week. Personally, he had not heard any argument that could be accepted as justification for this change of policy on the part of the Government. His colleagues would be disposed to agree with the hon. Member for Stoke in accepting a sliding scale, but it should not be such that it would place thousands of pensioners in a position inferior to that stated in the Bill. If they could have a sliding scale beginning at 10s. and going up to a maximum of 15s., it would be better. He had brought the claims of the members of trade unions, and especially of the boiler makers' society, before the House when the scheme of the Government was outlined in the Budget speech. He had pointed out that the boiler makers had, according to the rules of their society, 11s. a week, and remarked that in their case it was very hard lines that after they had been paying for thirty or thirty-five years out of their weekly earnings to provide for a rainy day, they should be ignored by the Government scheme. The position of the boiler-makers was that of tens of thousands of men and women, especially men who were members of trade unions and friendly societies. They got 9s. a week from the trade union, and 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. from the friendly society as continued sick pay, and it appeared to him that these were the very people of all the workers who should have most encouragement, having regard to the fact that for thirty-five or forty years they had regularly paid out of their earnings to make some provision for their old age. What did they find? They found that if the sliding scale suggested were accepted, the boilermaker, notwithstanding the fact that he had attempted to make some provision for himself, and was now receiving 11s. a week, might be told that he was going to have his position improved, and that he was going to receive 2s. a week. That in the opinion of his colleagues was altogether unsatisfactory. He thought that the fact of a man having made provision which brought him in 11s. a week, was a complete justification for his receiving as a right from the State no less a sum than 4s. a week, which would bring him to the maximum of 15s. a week. That was the only sliding scale which would at all meet with the approval not only of members of the Labour Party but practically the whole of the members of the trade union group. Therefore, they must take this matter to a division, and they would vote against the deletion of the 5s., because they believed that once the 5s. was taken away it involved the acceptance of a sliding scale which would not give a maximum income, including pension, of 15s. a week, but probably a maximum of 12s. or 13s. a week. That would be altogether unsatisfactory, and he lodged his most emphatic protest against any attempt on the part of the Government to accept the deletion of the 5s. on the understanding that such a sliding scale as he had referred to was to be accepted.

Mr. MADDISON (Burnley) said they were told that within a certain range the Government were willing to consider the question of the sliding scale, and it was understood that there were certain Members of that House who would very favourably consider that. He had no hesitation in saying that if the Government adhered to their fixed determination that they could not give them a sliding scale up to 15s., then they would very much prefer that the Government should adhere to their Bill as it stood. He did not know whether it was absolutely useless to make an appeal to the Government to extend it from 10s. to 15s., but his only reason for doing it was that many anomalies must exist if there were a fixed limit operating; it would work harshly and awkwardly. It was a fact that a good many of the more provident workers were in more than one society. The case of the boilermaker was altogether exceptional, and he thought that should be borne in mind. Nevertheless, he was very glad to say that a very large number of workmen did make provision in more than one society, and if they had a sliding scale of from 10s. to 15s. they would pick up a good deal of that best of all thrift, namely, that which was on the border line of necessity. Therefore, they had a very strong claim, and he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he had not come to an absolutely final conclusion, would still listen to this appeal that the sliding scale should be from 10s. to 15s. He was quite sure that the right hon. Gentleman would then get rid of some very awkward anomalies. If the Government adopted a sliding scale between 8s. and 13s. what would they be doing? The 9s. man would lose a 1s., because he would only get 4s., and the man with 10s. would lose 2s., because he would only get 3s. The man with 11s. would only get 1s. This Bill, he thought, would ultimately encourage thrift as based on necessity. Necessity was the primary basis in his view; and he would say to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it would be better to stick to his own Bill and not disappoint a large number of people who had been told over and over again, since the Bill was introduced, that for all those who had incomes of not more than 10s. a week, there was a pension of 5s. a week. It was good from that point of view, although that was not the chief point of view. In his opinion it was good from the economic point of view, because they were just at the stage where a shilling made all the difference. He hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would not be tempted from the straight path by offending the best friends of the Bill on that side of the House and the best friends of their own economic views on the other side. There was this to be said, that if they kept the Bill where it was, when they came to make those changes of which it had been agreed that this scheme naturally and necessarily admitted, then they could take an onward move from 10s. to 15s., for they would have kept that intact. Therefore he hoped that the Government would stick to the Bill as it was.

*MR. RENDALL (Gloucestershire, Thornbury) said he must express his astonishment at one or two of the speeches which had been made on this question of the sliding scale. The hon. Member for Burnley and the hon. Member for Barnard Castle had both spoken of certain expectations which had been held out by the Bill as introduced by the Government, and said that certain persons would be disappointed if the sliding scale was introduced. It seemed to him that this was a great experiment in regard to old-age pensions and it ought to be made, as far as it could be made, on the experience of the Colonies, where they had introduced old-age pensions, on the basis of the sliding scale. Were they, for the sake of not disappointing certain comparatively prosperous people who expected the whole 5s. to prohibit themselves from entering on a scheme on scientific and logical lines? Personally, he thought that even if they did disappoint hon. Members opposite, it was their duty to themselves, the House, and the country to try and bring in a scheme based on logical lines, and based on the experience of other countries and of our Colonies. If they had a scheme based on those excellent lines, they could afterwards add to it and build upon it. The difference caused by the sliding scale would be very slight in this country. A man who had saved 8s. a week would get 5s. pension; one with 9s. would get 4s., and so on, till a man with 13s. would get only 1s. After all, the vast majority of trade union and friendly society members did not possess 8s. weekly of their own at seventy, and would lose nothing by a reduction of the pension given to persons with incomes of over 8s. weekly. As regarded all the agricultural labourers, the sliding scale would make no difference whatever. It was hard that the sliding scale should be opposed simply because the boilermakers, and the men in one or two well-paid employments, with old-age allowances of 9s. or 10s. would not benefit to the extent they expected. A sliding scale would encourage thrift, would help friendly societies and trade unions, and would rid the Bill of what was a great blot, namely that a man with 10s. would get 5s. pension and so have 15s. and the man with 11s. would get nothing and be worse off because he had been more thrifty. There seemed to him to be perfectly sound reasons for the Government's leaving this an open question, and he agreed with what had been said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was perfectly right that this should be an open question, and that the House should be left to vote as it liked, whether they were in favour of the Bill as it was, or in favour of the sliding scale. That, after all, was fair and just, and he sincerely hoped that the Government would stick to their guns in regard to this matter, and that they should have a chance of voting as they liked on this question. Certainly, if he had that chance, he should vote in favour of the sliding scale.

MR. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford) said he felt with his hon. friend the Member for Barnard Castle and the hon. Member for Burnley, and also with his hon. friend the Member for Stoke, that the main interest excited throughout the country was centred in the fact that there was to be a pension of 5s. a week as the minimum. He did not see why the man who had been thrifty, and had beyond 10s. a week as a result of saving his earnings, should not have the pension of 5s. He thought that the Government might go a little wider in their scope in regard to the 10s. He believed the difference would be nothing like so great as was anticipated, and the benefit would be enormous. They had under the proposed schedules, a reduction of the 5s. almost down to the vanishing point to those who had been thrifty. He did not think when they considered the investigation and the trouble which would be given to the applicants before the Pension Committee, it would be worth it just to get 1s., as they would in many cases. He hoped the Government would see their way even now to extend the limit so as to meet a few of the cases which had been put before them, and he thought they would get over the whole of the difficulties, and the effect upon the industrial classes of the country who had been relieved in their old age would be of such a character that they would reciprocate with all their earnestness the good that had been done by the House—not entirely by a Party—which had risen on a great occasion to do a great thing. He again besought the Government if they possibly could to extend their limit and to extend the scope of the benefit, not by making the people pay for their pensions out of their own thrift, which was the basis of the sliding scale. His opinion was that nothing would give a greater incentive to thrift than meeting the people in a generous manner, and he hoped the Government would be able to do so.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.) said the statement made on behalf of the Government that this was to be a question to be left to the consideration of the House did not necessarily imply that the Government would not give some guidance to the House. It had certainly been left to the free consideration of the Committee in its first stage, and he did not propose to do anything more than to state the case more or less on both sides. It was urged that further money should be offered for the purposes of this scheme in order to enable the sliding scale to begin at 10s. instead of 8s. But suppose hon. Members accepted as a fact that there was only a limited amount of money to distribute in the current year in the form of old-age pensions, did they wish that limited amount of money to be distributed amongst persons receiving 13s., 14s., or 15s. a week or amongst persons with a smaller income? He thought there could only be one answer to that question, and he did not think hon. Members were well advised in putting forward proposals which would increase the amount of money distributed amongst old-age pensioners with larger incomes until they had, at any rate, been able to consider the case of persons under seventy years of age and of persons who were infirm and other cases where there was a stronger claim upon the public needs than in the case of persons who had already got incomes of 13s., 14s., or 15s. Therefore he must beg the Committee at this stage to consider that they must be limited to the amount of money which his right hon. friend had already placed at the disposal of the scheme. As to the arguments for and against the sliding scale, first of all there was the point that the Government, having once introduced their proposals promising 5s. a week to all pensioners who had an income not exceeding 10s., it would cause great disappointment if persons with incomes of 10s. only received 3s. a week. That was true, but everybody understood on the introduction of the Bill that it was subject to modification. It was a real objection with which he sympathised, but the number of persons who would be disappointed was very small. The great bulk of the pensioners would be persons who were receiving less than 8s. a week. How many of the 500,000 pensioners had anything like 8s. a week? They were also establishing on its primary basis a scheme which was to last for a very great number of years, which would be extended, they hoped, but which would not be cut down, and the number of persons disappointed, already small, would be a vanishing quantity. On the other hand, if they were making a mistake by not introducing a sliding scale, the mistake would cover, for the whole period that the pension scheme ran, a very large number of people and would be continued for all time, because once they had established it it was a very difficult thing to alter. For that reason, although he considered that the disappointment was a serious matter and something which could not be overlooked or neglected, nevertheless it was not an argument of so convincing a kind that the Committee ought to be necessarily guided by it. The next point was the difficulty the pension committee would have in discovering the precise income of an applicant for a pension—whether he had £26 or £26 5s., or £20 8s., or whatever the precise amount might be. The answer to that was that the number of persons in each pension area who would take pensions under the sliding scale would be extremely small, and although it might be quite true that there would be difficulty in determining the income within such narrow limits, still, as the number of persons in connection with whom the difficulty would arise would be small, it was not a difficulty which the pension committee could not get over. He admitted it was an argument against the sliding scale, but it was not a conclusive argument. Then those who were in favour of a sliding scale had put forward very cogently and rightly the argument in favour of it based on grounds of thrift. It was very difficult to defend a system under which a person with an income of 10s. a week was to receive 5s., and to be in enjoyment of 15s. a week, a very substantial income to many agricultural labourers, whereas a person with 10s. 6d. would receive nothing. On the other hand, it had to be remembered that in establishing a system of this kind simplicity was an enormous advantage. They might have a simple kind of pension scheme which would be recognised without difficulty or trouble at the Post Office, and that was a very strong argument in favour of confining the pension in every case to a single payment of 5s. It was also quite evident that the liability to fraud arising from forgery was much less if they had a single type of 5s. form than if they had a multiple number of types, and if they had a large number of form books it would certainly add to the liability of forging signatures. Personally, he did not wish in the least, speaking on behalf of the Government at this stage—it was most desirable that the views of the Committee should be taken—to declare what the views of the Government might be upon the subject, but he had thought it necessary to clear up one or two points on which there appeared to be some misunderstanding.

*MR. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.) called attention to the very uncertain basis adopted for the payment of the pension. A man who had 10s. a week this year might not have it next year. It was not only rich people who had uncertain incomes. That point had not been mentioned, and he understood the Government had not provided for it at all. Further than that he held that the whole basis of the pension ought not to depend on fluctuating incomes. A man might get his 10s. a week in extremely disgraceful fashion, and another might get it in the very best way he possibly could. These two men ought not to be put on the same level, but they must be if the House insisted upon taking income, and nothing but income, as a basis for their scheme. The right hon. Gentleman, in introducing the measure, put it on its right basis, and he thought they ought never to have moved from that. He said—

> "I demur altogether to the division of the schemes into contributory and non-contributory. So long as you have taxes imposed upon commodities which are consumed practically by every family in the country there is no such thing as a non-contributory scheme."

They were discussing, therefore, not a non-contributory, but a contributory scheme, and that seemed to have escaped the attention of the House. The right hon. Gentleman went on—

> "So, therefore, when a scheme is financed out of public funds it is as much a contributory scheme as a scheme which is financed directly by means of contributions arranged on the German or any other basis. A workman who has contributed health and strength, vigour and skill to the creation of the wealth by which taxation is borne, has made his contribution already to the fund which is to give him a pension when he is no longer fit to create that wealth. Therefore I object altogether to the general division of these schemes into contributory and non-contributory schemes."

These extracts prove that the Chancellor of the Exchequer considers that the right foundation for a pension was the amount of work which a man had contributed to the wealth of the nation. Surely that was a sound and the only foundation upon which they ought to proceed. The whole argument based solely upon an income-limit was false and wrong, and the only sound foundation was to go back to the bed-rock principle that a man by his work had already contributed so much to the wealth of the country and had a right to demand what was really deferred pay. Was there anything unsound in that argument? The more a man had contributed to the wealth of the nation by his labour the more he had a right to receive, and those who by longest years of work have contributed most should rank first for pensions before anyone else.

Sir F. BANBURY asked how the hon. Member proposed to arrive at the amount of work a man had done.

*Mr. VERNEY thought it would not be so difficult as the hon. Baronet seemed to imagine to calculate the pension a man was entitled to by the number of years he had worked. This could be done by the local Pension Commissioners, who can easily find out whether a long work claim for a pension was or was not properly made out. His strong feeling in favour of a sliding scale was based upon the tremendous hardship and injustice which would be inflicted in some cases under the system of the Bill. He did not say that he had committed himself to a sliding scale, because if the Government told him that under no circumstances could this country produce the amount of money required he should be driven to adopt the fixed scale although it worked unjustly. He understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer based this Bill upon work, and he called upon the House to consider the Bill as a contributory scheme on the principle of the amount of work given to the nation. He was aware that as between employer and workman the latter got his wages and there was an end of the matter as far as the two were concerned, but not in regard to the nation. There was a considerable surplus which the nation gained by the work which was not represented by the wages received, and it was upon that basis that they might fairly found the right to claim this pension, and not as a dole from the Government. Every man who had worked up to the age of seventy had done it not only for himself, but also with advantage to the wealth of the nation at large. If that basis was sound, they ought to discuss the sliding scale on a different foundation from that taken up in this debate, and he asked whether there was not common-sense and equity in the theory that the moment they put matters on the sound basis of work to a large extent they got rid of the difficulty on the unsound basis of a fluctuating income. He considered the question of contribution was brought in under a sliding scale, and as he had not been called to order he assumed that there was apparent to the Deputy-Chairman a connection between the sliding scale and the contribution. He knew it was a bold thing to suggest that the foundation of the Bill should be changed, but he urged the Government to take the principle laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as the foundation of what is in reality a contributory scheme in its true sense.

Mr. ELLIS DAVIES (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) opposed the Amendment on the ground that it would penalise those who had been most thrifty. The application of a sliding scale would also involve the putting of inquisitorial or impertinent questions to the applicant, which some persons resented; and the result would probably be that those most worthy of a pension would not apply for it at all. There was another difficulty which must arise both with a sliding scale and with any restriction as to income, viz., how was the amount of income to be arrived at? Last year they spent many weeks passing a Small Holdings Bill, and he would like to know how, for the purposes of this Bill, they were going to compute the income of the small holder? Quite 80 per cent. of the farmers in his district farmed less than 50 acres of land, and it would be difficult to decide whether that man came within the income limit of 10s. per week. If the income-tax basis was going to be taken for the purpose of the pension scheme the result would be that in every single instance in his division, although a man was farming between 40 and 50 acres, he would still come within the income limit of £26 per annum. If they were going to have either an income limit or a sliding scale they would have to inquire into what the applicant's income was, and then the difficulty arose of ascertaining the income. The great objection which people had to applying for Poor Law relief was that when they made an application they were subjected to all kinds of questions, often inquisitorial and sometimes impertinent. He was aware that the hon. Member for Preston had said that the biggest liar would get the biggest pension. If they adopted a low income-limit they would retard those who were most deserving from applying for pensions. He appealed to his right hon. friend to adhere to the Bill as it stood and if possible to emphasise what had been said by the hon. Member for Paddington in regard to raising the income limit. They would no doubt be met with the question of the money required to carry out this suggestion, but he was not satisfied that the figures given in the course of the discussion were correct. It had been suggested that there were 400,000 people in receipt of more than 10s. a week. That was the basis upon which the Bill had been drawn. The total number of estates passing through the Treasury was 60,000, and half of these were under £800, consequently the number of estates producing £26 per annum could not be very large.

LORD R. CECIL said it appeared to him that the arguments in favour of a sliding scale were very strong. The hon. Member had pointed out with great force the great difficulty which would arise in being quite sure whether an income was over or under 10s. a week. The question whether a person should receive a pension or not depended on whether he had 10s. or more a week. It was, therefore, a matter of the first importance that they should be able to determine with something like scientific accuracy whether he had or had not an income amounting to the limit fixed for the minimum. If they had a sliding scale, it became less vital to ascertain the exact amount of the income. The hon. Member foresaw the great difficulty which would arise in ascertaining whether a person's income amounted to more than the fixed minimum, and his remedy was to strike out the income limit altogether. That was a proposal which had certain attractions, but he could quite see that it had not many for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would mean, of course, an immense extension of the Bill. If they did not strike out the limit altogether they came near meeting his hon. friend's argument in favour of having a sliding scale. He listened with the utmost attention to the speech of his hon. friend near him, and he was not sure whether he was in favour of a sliding scale or against it. So far as he could make out, his view was that they ought not to have a sliding scale, and he seemed to read the Bill as if the possession of 10s. a week was a necessary condition in order to obtain a pension. [AN HON. MEMBER: No.] That was what he understood him to say, and that was not his own reading of the Bill. The hon. Member proposed to substitute for the ridiculous proposal in the Bill a different, but rather nebulous, suggestion that a pension should depend upon the amount of work a man had done. That would not get rid of an inquisitorial inquiry into a man's past life. That was a wholly impracticable proposal. He did not see how any Government official could ascertain how much work a man had done. If they were going into semi-ethical questions of that kind, they must see not only how much work a man had done, but how much he might have done, and, therefore, the hon. Member's suggestion, though interesting, was rather dreamy. The actual question which the Committee had to consider was whether there should be a sliding scale or a fixed limit. He had received, and no doubt hon. Members in all parts of the House had received, many letters from friendly societies pointing out that it would be a great disadvantage if the effect of the Bill was to penalise those who had obtained the right to benefit from those societies. It would be quite obviously impracticable to disregard what a man obtained from his friendly society, because it would be impossible to recognise one form and not other forms of thrift. That being so, the only way of saving the friendly society to some extent was to adopt the sliding scale. The adoption of the sliding scale would avoid the danger of friendly society pensioners losing the State pension altogether through the receipt of any casual—he would not say casual, but any advantage from accidental—assistance bringing his income above the fixed limit. With regard to the argument for simplicity, he was against simplicity on its merits—[Laughter]—in a matter of this kind he meant. He did not mean to say always. It simply meant the ignoring of some important element in the case. He thought they were all agreed that this scheme must be extended or modified in future. When the pension scheme was extended, as the Government said it must be extended, to bring in infirmity, they would really have great complications, and it was ridiculous for the sake of simplicity for a few years to sanction a scheme which was unsound. He hoped the Amendment would be accepted, or some other Amendment of the same kind.

MR. HOLT said he should like to enter a word of protest against the doctrine of his hon. friend th eMember for Stoke, who seemed to think that, when the Government had introduced a Bill containing certain proposals, it would be a breach of faith if the House did not come to the same conclusion as the Government, quite irrespective of any views which might be held by hon. Members that the money might be divided more fairly among the probable recipients. He did not think the consideration put forward by the hon. Member was one to which the Committee ought to give any weight. They were perfectly entitled to ask that the money should be distributed in some other way from that proposed by the Government. He thought everybody admitted that a universal scheme would be better than one which was cut short by an income limit. But if they had to accept an income limit, they were under the necessity of considering how it was to be applied. That being so, what they had now to consider was simply whether they were going to adopt a sliding scale or whether they wished the recipients to be cut off if they had 10s. a week. It seemed to him that it would be an absolute injustice that a man who had 11s. or 12s. a week derived from his savings should be in a worse position than a man who had 8s. or 9s. a week. That was an injustice which did not seem to require any argument whatever. He thought the arguments in favour of a sliding scale were overwhelming. There was the additional unfairness of the proposed limit that the man with the 12s. would contribute by indirect taxation to the pension of his brother in a better position. Consideration should be shown in any scale adopted to the man who had saved more than another. If a man who received 12s. was put in a worse position than the man receiving 10s., there would be a great temptation to the man to get rid of 2s. a week as he approached the age of seventy. He had put an Amendment on the Paper which he hoped would be considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His proposal worked out to this effect. The basis of income of a man was put at £22 10s. a year, and if the means of the person exceeded this amount, an old-age pension should be payable at a rate reduced by 6d. a week in respect of every sum of £2 10s. a year by by which his means exceeded that amount. By this method the man who saved more would always be in the better position. There was one point he was not quite sure about in the Bill. What was the position of those people who received pensions from large firms, private employers, or individuals, to which they had no legal claim? It was obvious that if this allowance or pension was to be calculated in the income of these persons, it might put them in a worse position, because the employer or employers would have every inducement to reduce the allowance, thereby improving the pensioners' position and saving his and their own pocket. He cordially supported the proposal for a sliding scale, and he asked the Government to consider his plan; but he hoped that the Committee would not commit itself at present to any particular sliding scale. They should rather induce the Government to take time to bring forward a well-considered scheme.

LORD BALCARRES said that probably the Committee agreed with the hon. Member for Hexham that the insertion of a sliding scale would avoid certain dangers inseparable from a hard and fast line. There would be considerable temptation to reduce existing sources of income in order to qualify under the Act. He was personally acquainted with a case where, under an old family arrangement, ten old men and ten old women received pensions of between 10s. and 11s. a week. These people had to be seventy years of age, so that *ipso facto* they would be qualified under the Bill. It also happened that the *ipso facto* qualification for the pension connoted good character, and the labour test mentioned by the hon. Member for Buckinghamshire. If the Bill as it stood passed it to law these old people might come and say to the man paying the pensions "reduce my allowance to 9s. or 10s." as the case might be, so that they would get 3s. or 4s. more each week, and the man who paid the pensions would save £50 a year. The fourth clause of the Bill contained a provision directed against a person depriving himself of income or property in order to qualify for a pension; but it was impossible for the State to punish a man who reduced the allowances to the old people he had mentioned, because he was entitled to do so. The chief conspirator could not be reached in such a case; but a conspiracy of that kind could be avoided by adopting a sliding scale, which would reduce to a minimum the temptation to yield to it. He agreed with the hon. Member for Marylebone that mere simplicity in this matter should not be considered. The Bill might look simple, but even now it was one of the most complicated schemes ever devised, and they were not going to make it less simple by introducing a sliding scale. His hon. friend near him seemed to think that the sliding scale of the hon. Member for Worcester was not in the slightest degree inquisitorial, but what was far from simple was not the question of making inquiries by a Pension Committee, but really to ascertain what a man's income actually was. He did not know whether the Government was going to give a rather more definite outline to the Committee of their scheme than the First Lord of the Admiralty had given. At the conclusion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech he had no idea whether the First Lord of the Admiralty had really supported the sliding scale or not. On the whole he imagined that the right hon. Gentleman was more opposed to a sliding scale than not. However, he hoped that the objections to a sliding scale on the part of the Government were not going to be put on the flimsy ground stated by the First Lord of the Admiralty. One question which would have to be considered was as to the effect a sliding scale would have on friendly societies. In common with every Member of the House he had had dozens of circulars from friendly societies pointing out with excellent force that under a fixed limit a man who had saved a certain amount of money must be penalised. That was admitted; but he would hesitate before he accepted what was stated on the other side of the House that thrift or saving was by no means the only possible test in this matter; that a man who had brought up a family and done for himself well, had done as much for the State as a man who had put his savings into a friendly society. It was rather difficult to determine the amount of a man's contribution for the education of his children, but it was less than it was forty or fifty years ago, and as time went on it would become still less, because education had been made obligatory and free, and therefore it involved less thrift on the part of the parent than his contribution to a friendly society. [AN HON. MEMBER on the Labour Benches: He pays for the free education.] He paid for free education by means of taxes, but would that justify him in receiving a pension of 5s. a week? He did not think that the hon. Member's interjection was economically sound. An hon. Member below the gangway had said that if a sliding scale were accepted by the Government, hopes which had been unfortunately introduced into the minds of the electorate would be dispelled. The hon. Member said it was not 5s. a week that was promised by the Government, but an old-age pension subject to certain limitations. He thought the Government, in accepting a sliding scale, would be justified in reducing the 5s., provided that in so doing they did not inflict hardships upon the people at large. Even if some who were expecting 5s. were disappointed, it would certainly be a welcome surprise to a very much larger number of persons who would get a still larger sum. He would like the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell them what the effect of the several schedules on the paper was going to be. Those scales had been very carefully drawn so as to keep the corpus of the money to be expended within the limitations set forth by the Bill, but he apprehended that they were not drafted on any careful actuarial basis, or on any specific knowledge of the population of different ages. He would like to know whether the result of any of them would be to increase or substantially to diminish the total expenditure of £7,500,000.

*Mr. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said it was perfectly obvious that anomalies, inequalities, and even apparent injustices must occur to some extent whatever system was adopted, and all they could do was to seek out the line of least resistance and find some way by which these anomalies and hardships might be reduced to a minimum. It was well-known that many provident societies gave pensions or superannuations to their members, and there had been many appeals that these should not be taken into account in pensions. But it would be obviously impossible to discriminate between those cases and other kinds of thrift. He believed that the Society of Boilermakers gave a superannuation of 11s. a week, and it would be a great hardship if a man in receipt of this superannuation were disqualified for a pension, while another receiving 10s. would receive 5s. He should be very glad to see the principle of the sliding scale accepted by the Government, although he very much hoped that they would not be committed to any particular sliding scale.

*Mr. LEIF JONES said that the Committee appeared in this case to be discussing two things. On the question of a sliding scale in general there would be no difference of opinion. Everyone was theoretically in favour of a sliding scale. No one could justify the inequality by which a man with 10s. a week got a pension while a man with 10s. 6d. received nothing. The question they were now discussing was, however, whether with the money at their disposal they desired to have a sliding scale below the 10s. at present in the Bill, or whether they should keep the 10s. and wait until some future time for the sliding scale. While he was in favour of a sliding scale he was not in favour of lowering the income limit at which the 5s. would be granted below 10s. Personally, he preferred to wait for the establishment of the sliding scale until more money was available rather than begin at the limit of 8s. suggested. Most of the sliding scales hitherto proposed seemed to tend against thrift almost as much as the fixed limit included in the Bill. The ideal sliding scale would be so arranged that the man who saved most would always have the largest income. He, therefore, hoped that when the Government considered these sliding scales they would not lose sight of that put down on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Hexham, which started with a limit of 8s. 6d. and proceeded to deduct 6d. from the pension for every extra shilling the man saved, so that a man with 8s. 6d., would have 5s. pension, and a total income of 13s. 6d.; a man with 9s. 6d. would receive 4s. 6d. pension, and have a total income of 14s., and so on, until the maximum of 18s. was reached. As the matter stood at present the Government had only a fixed sum of money. He thought it would be unwise to go below the 10s. limit, and hoped that in the future the Government would lay down a scale starting with 10s., and following the lines of the scale of the hon. Member for Hexham.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that the question which the Committee had to decide was whether there ought to be a sliding scale or not. The Committee was now reaching a point in the discussion when it ought to have some indication of the views of the Government and he contended that the Government must make up their minds as to the adoption of one course or the other. For himself he had made up his mind because, whatever course they decided upon, it was certain that some Members would desire to criticise it. He had made up his mind and had expressed his views more than once before the Committee, and nothing which had passed in that or previous discussions had in any way altered his decision, which he believed was shared by the party with which he acted, that a sliding scale was preferable to a fixed income limit. The hon. Member who had just sat down had said that probably in the abstract there was hardly anybody who would dissent from that view, and he noticed that the hon. Member for Stoke, who was the first from the benches below the gangway to rise, did not protest against a sliding scale. He based the whole of his objections upon the fact that any sliding scale they were likely to adopt would give less than 5s. per week to those who already had an income of 10s., and that having regard to the hopes raised by the introduction of the measure, would create so much disappointment;

indeed, he thought he put it higher and said it would almost amount to something in the nature of a breach of faith with the expectants who were in possession of 10s. He would say frankly that he did not like the 10s. limit at all, though he was with the Government in thinking they were obliged to have one. The lower they fixed the income limit, the more it tended to discourage thrift. When a man had saved a certain amount, the habit of saving was acquired; and the fact that he had got something tended to make him go on saving. The difficulty was to make the first beginning. Any appreciable result seemed so far off that the long and persistent effort did not seem worth making; but, once a man had got a certain sum to his credit, it was wonderful how he saved. He therefore regretted that they should have to fix their income-limit as low as 10s. He was, however, bound to recognise that the Government had only a certain amount of money to deal with. They were, as it was, dealing with much more money than they had provided for. They were drawing bills upon the future. He did not want, therefore, to urge them upon any course which would increase the financial burdens they had already to face. He sympathised with the regret of the hon. Member for Stoke that those who had incomes of 10s should get less than 5s. under a sliding scale, and he should be glad if they could have a scale under which those with 10s. would get 5s., those with 11s. 4s., and so on, instead of diminishing the amount to those who had 10s.; but he accepted the limitation imposed by the Government, that they could not increase the total sum which they had allocated as available for the purposes of the present Bill, and he had only to ask how that sum could be best allocated. He thought it could be best allocated on a graduated system. There was nothing more important, in establishing State old-age pensions or State assistance for provision in old age, than that they should be scrupulously careful not to discourage thrift. A sense of injustice would inevitably be aroused in the minds of those who, perhaps, at great sacrifice, by great self-restraint, and by the practice of prudence and thrift, had laid aside for themselves, if they found they were worse off than the man who with greater opportunities had made less effort to save, because they had saved just a few pence or shillings more than he had done. He could not help feeling that the effect of that would be so bad and that the sense of injustice would be so great, that they would have founded their old-age pensions on wrong lines. If once they founded their scheme on wrong lines, it would be very difficult to get away from them. They could easily start with a graduated scheme which complied with the Government conditions, and then, when more money was available, they could make it more generous in the sense desired by the hon. Member for Stoke and others who had spoken. Another consideration had enormous weight with him. There were a great number of old people who received under the name of wages what were in fact partly wages and partly pensions, paid by their employers. This was the case with railway servants and people in private service, especially those connected with large estates. There was no legal obligation upon the owners to do anything, but many of them recognised a moral obligation to do something for those who had served them long and faithfully on their estates when they were partially incapacitated by old age and infirmity. There were a great number of these payments made weekly to such people under the name of wages, but they were not in fact wages at all, because the recipients were too infirm to give full value at the present day for the sums they received and were no longer capable of earning them. A great number of these people received sums of between 10s. to 15s., and, if they fixed a rigid limit of 10s., the employers would ask why they should pay more in order to save the taxpayers at large, and the workmen themselves would go to their employers and say that if they gave them 10s. instead of 12s. they would be able to receive the pension and have 15s. He thought they would find, if they fixed a rigid limit, that all those earning anything from 10s. to 15s. would have a tendency in a short time to earn no more than 10s., and such a change as that could not take place without having a bad effect upon the wages of old people who had not yet reached the pension age. He could not say that this was capable of proof, but it seemed a reasonable and natural corollary from such a rigid scheme as was embodied in the Bill. For these reasons, as well as for the further reason which had been adduced by his friends during the course of the debate, he should vote for the substitution of a sliding scale for the rigid 10s. limit without prejudice to the particular sliding scale which was to be adopted if the Committee took the same view. He quite agreed that before they could decide on the particular scale to be adopted they must have some opinion from the Government, such as they only could give, though it would necessarily largely be guesswork, as to the relative cost of the different schemes. He was sorry they were limited by the funds available. He did not himself like the principles upon which the Bill was cast. He would much have preferred a contributory scheme with a special non-contributory scheme for those who were already aged. He, however, accepted the limitation laid down that they were not to spend more than from £6,000,000 to £7,000,000 already allocated to the subject, and, acting in full harmony with the principles of the Bill, he earnestly appealed to the Government to adopt a sliding scale in preference to a rigid income limit.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that this question had caused the Government a good deal of perplexity. There was no doubt a good deal to be said on both sides, and it was only a very slight balance which at first turned the scale in favour of the rigid limit. The Government had decided to take the guidance of the Committee in the matter. Personally, he had always been in favour of leaving more of these questions in Committee to the House. He held that view strongly in Opposition and he had not changed his mind. He thought it was a great pity that many more questions could not be left to the opinion of the House. His own opinion was strongly in favour of a sliding scale. He was at the same time fully alive to the objections to a sliding scale. There was the objection that it would interfere with simplicity of administration. But, after all, he did not think that was conclusive. It added a good deal of complexity, and it lacked something in the way of cost, but he did not think the considerations on that ground were sufficiently strong to weigh down the reasons in favour of a sliding scale. There were two points he would like to put to the House. Every scheme of non-contributory old-age pensions was one which had a sliding scale. The New Zealand, Victoria, and Queensland schemes, and, he believed, the new scheme of the Commonwealth, all had a sliding scale. They were all so fully alive to the injustice and irritation which might be caused by a rigid scale that they had come to the conclusion that the sliding scale was, on the whole, fairer, in spite of its cost and the difficulty in administration. He thought New Zealand was the colonial pioneer in old-age pensions. They had had the sliding scale in operation there for years, and he believed there had been no difficulty in it. It had worked very well. If it had broken down in New Zealand, and had been open to the objections which had been raised in that debate, the result would have been that the Commonwealth Parliament and the Australian States Parliament when they considered their schemes would have adopted a rigid scale; but it had been so successful that every Parliament that had considered the problem, with full knowledge of what had happened in New Zealand, had adopted the sliding scale. He had listened very carefully to the debate and had been very much struck by the fact that every speaker, whether he had been for or against, had in substance approved the principle of the sliding scale. The hon. Member for Barnard Castle had approved it, and another hon. Member, after condemning it on every principle, ended by saying that had it been a sliding scale of 10s. to 15s. he would have voted for it. That was not principle, but cash. He would say at once that a sliding scale of 10s. to 15s. would be impossible at the present stage. The Government had to consider what money they had at their disposal for this scheme next year, and he trusted the House would accept the responsibility of the

Government in that respect. They considered what money they could raise, and they wanted this Bill to be a Bill which would distribute that money and not exceed it. They did not want to legislate for a deficit. They could not face a 10s. to 15s. limit at the present stage, and, personally, even if he saw his way to finding the extra three-quarters of a million necessary, he would rather devote that money to extending the principle in other directions. He would far rather give the money to the men now on the pauper list. If he found he had a surplus he would rather spend it in that direction than in the direction of 2s. or 3s. to a man who had 14s. or 15s. What they were deciding now was the principle of the sliding scale, and he wished to be quite frank with the House. He did not think it would be right for him to say: "Decide on the sliding scale and then we can go on to decide whether it is to be an 8s. to 15s. scale or a 10s. to 13s. scale." That would not be fair. The House, as far as the Government were concerned, were not considering that. They were considering a sliding scale more or less on the lines of the sliding scale which had been set down by the hon. Member for Worcester—from 8s. to 13s. That would cost the Government a little more probably than their present estimate, but he thought they could face that.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain how it will cost more?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that there was administration, to begin with. The sliding scale would undoubtedly cost a little more in administration, and the savings were not so great as the hon. Member would imagine. The vast bulk of those who would obtain pensions were under 8s. The graduation effected a comparatively small proportion. He would be happy to give the hon Member a copy of the New Zealand Register, in which he would find that the sliding scale affected a certain number of people, but that the vast majority came on the highest scale, as they would do here. They would not, therefore, save very much on the 9s. or 10s., and would be adding a considerable number at 11s. and 12s. That was the first thing he wanted to put to the Committee. It would be far better, if they decided on a sliding scale, to leave it open for the future so that it might be raised gradually. If they fixed it rigidly at 10s. they could augment it to 15s., but in his judgment a Chancellor of the Exchequer would shrink from it, whereas, were it an 8s. to 13s. scale, it would be nothing to put on 1s. one year, and after two or three years they could put on another 1s. But if they went for rigid limit now it would be much more difficult to put the superstructure afterwards than if they began with the sliding scale and left it open. Let them consider the two systems on their merits. The arguments had been so forcibly put before the House that all he could do was practically to repeat them. First of all, there was the inducement to thrift. There was the injustice of the man who, having saved 8s. a week, received 13s., while one who had saved 11s. a week got nothing; so that the man who had saved only 8s. was much better off than the man who had saved 11s. That, of course, was *pro tanto* a distinct discouragement to thrift. That was the reason why the friendly societies were in favour of the sliding scale, because it was an inducement to their membership. Another point was that if they had a rigid scale it was rather an inducement to cut down the price of labour. The right hon. Gentleman had given the case of men who got 12s. for pottering about an estate. Their labour was not worth it, but after they had been working for thirty or forty years their employers did not like to get rid of them, and the old people liked to pretend to work. As they were given 11s. or 12s. it would be a distinct kindness to them to cut down their wages to 9s. Their employers would not do it to save 1s. or 2s., but it would be a positive inducement to them to do it. The workman would say to the employer: "By giving me 11s. instead of 9s. you are robbing me of 2s." That, in itself, made the whole thing rather ridiculous, and from that point of view it was unfair to the workman. It would certainly depress the value of labour. Another point was that it was an inducement to people to circumvent the Exchequer. He did not use the word "defraud"—that was not the point; but it was an inducement to people to circumnavigate the regulations, and they would do so. There would be a regular conspiracy. People would depress their incomes to a certain point by arrangements with their employers and their relatives, and the worst thing would be that they would do it with a certain amount of sympathy if there was a rigid limit. If a man had an income of 10s. 6d. he got nothing at all. Now that was an inducement to him to get rid of his extra 6d., and most people would rather sympathise with the arrangement, whereas, if he tried to depress his income by 6d. to get an extra 1s. out of the Exchequer, public opinion would be against it. It would certainly be a mistake from the point of view of the Exchequer, for he was sure that under the present system there would be no 11s. man at all and no 10s. 6d. man. There would be no 11s. 6d. men, and he was rather doubtful if there would be any 12s. men. While he did not think a man would go to all that trouble for the sake of 6d., a whole 5s. was a different matter. It was a gigantic sum for a man who was living on 10s. a week at seventy years of age, and, therefore, there was a direct inducement of a kind which they ought not, at any rate, to offer men under those conditions to get rid of their property, depress the value of their labour, and make these arrangements with relatives and employers. He did not think they ought to offer them this temptation. In these circumstances, after giving very careful consideration to it, he was strongly in favour of a sliding scale. He had listened to the debate with a view to hearing what there was to be said against it. No one had said a word against a sliding scale. He had not heard a single speech against a sliding scale. He had heard it said that they had offered 5s. to men with 10s. a week income, but surely, if that was the case, what was the good of the House of Commons at all? Was the Government not to listen to argument and was it not to consider anything that was pressed upon it in the course of discussion, because somebody who was getting some benefit under the Bill would, by the alteration, suffer slightly, while somebody else would be getting more? Surely this was a deliberative Assembly. The House of Commons must really have a free hand to consider a point of this kind. He did not think they were entitled to say, until the Bill was through the House of Commons, that that was what the House of Commons was offering. Then they were entitled to say it, he agreed, but only then. The Government ought to be perfectly free to consider every argument and consideration that was pressed upon them, and having done so, he must say that his predilection in favour of a sliding scale had been very considerably strengthened by the arguments he had heard that night. For that reason he strongly urged the House of Commons to insert a sliding scale in the Bill. What sliding scale, would be the next question to consider. When the noble Lord's first Amendment for the omission of the 5s. rate was put, then, if the House of Commons found in its favour, that would be in favour of a sliding scale. When the noble Lord moved his next Amendment, he (the speaker) would move an Amendment to it. But he did not wish to mix up the actual figures of the sliding scale with the principle. For the moment he would content himself with saying that, speaking as the Minister in charge of the Bill, he had come to the conclusion that certainly the balance of advantage was in favour of introducing a sliding scale into the Bill.

*THE CHAIRMAN: I am not quite sure whether the words of the Amendment carry out exactly what is desired.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE, on a point of order, suggested that the noble Lord should move to omit from the clause the words "at the rate of 5s. a week," and insert "at the rate set forth in the schedule to this Act." The noble Lord would find that the words "at the rate" must be in.

MR. WALTER LONG suggested that the noble Lord should withdraw his Amendment, and that the Amendment on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Worcester should be moved. That would meet the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH asked leave to withdraw the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, to leave out the words 'of five shillings a week,' and insert the words 'set forth in the schedule to this Act.'"—(*Mr. Goulding.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 118; Noes, 334. (Division List No. 133.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Barnes, G. N.
Bell, Richard
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix (Thornley
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Curran, Peter Francis
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Devlin, Joseph
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Fenwick, Charles
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lamb, Edmund G.(Leominster)
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras, E)
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Marnham, F. J.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A.(Queen'sCo.)
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Power, Patrick Joseph
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Charles Duncan.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn Sir Alex. F
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H.(Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Black, Arthur W.

Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B
Bodie, H. C.
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cave, George
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,RtHn.J.A (Worc)
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Coates, Major E.F. (Lewisham)
Collings,Rt.Hn.J. (Birmingh'm
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Corbett,CH (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craik,SirHenry
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalrymple,Viscount
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(Montgomery Co.
Davis, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duckworth, James
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W.V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Ferens, T. R.
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Forster, Henry William
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Gooch,Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gretton, John
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guinness, Walter Edward
Gurdon,RtHn.SirW. Brampton
Haddock, George B.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hardy, Laurence(Kent,Ashf'rd
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc.)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss)
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Helmsley, Viscount
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon, S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope,James Fitzalan(Sheffield
Hope,W. Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hunt, Rowland
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennaway,Rt.Hn. Sir John H.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon.
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S)
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Mackarness, Frederic C.
M'Arthur, Charles
M Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Magnus, Sir Philip
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morpeth, Viscount
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray,Capt..HnA.C.(Kincard.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholson,Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Percy, Earl
Philipps,Col. Ivor(S'thampton)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk,E.)
Priestley,W.E.B. (Bradford,E.)
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'

Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, SirC.E.(Manchester)
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorge D.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smith, F.E. (Liverpool,Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanier, Beville
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'dUniv.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas,Abel(Carmarthen, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J.W.H.(Somerset,E
Thomson,W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thorne, G. R.(Wolverhampton
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Verney, F. W.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walton, Joseph
Ward,W. Dudley(South'mpton
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Winterton, Earl
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. HARCOURT said he thought it would be necessary to insert after the word "in" the words "Part I. of" in order to make it clear. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed to the proposed Amendment—

"After the word 'in,' to insert the words 'Part I. of.'"—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that when these words were proposed to be inserted he would make a statement on behalf of the Government as to the schedule which they were prepared to accept, and to give the Committee the information which many Members had asked for as to the cost of the scheme which had been adumbrated by the hon. Member for Worcester.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that, of course, the Committee would not expect him to make a definite statement now, and the right hon. Gentleman knew how complicated this question was. The schedule of the noble Lord the Member for Maidstone was only placed on the Paper that morning, and it was impossible to form an estimate as to what would be the cost of accepting such a schedule. He was in a better position to express an opinion in regard to the schedule of the hon. Member for Worcester. It would cost the Government a little more than their original estimate. How much more he could not exactly say—probably £100,000—but well within their means. He could not, however, accept the schedule of the hon. Member quite in its present form, and would have to alter it in certain respects. It would not quite work out at the figures which the hon. Member gave. But he would have the figures carefully calculated, now that he had got the instructions of the House to proceed on a sliding scale; and, while he could not now say exactly the form in which he would put down the schedule, he should, as at present advised, take the bases suggested by the hon. Member, and certainly would be in a position to put the schedule on the Paper several days before it could come on for discussion.

Mr. WALTER LONG thought that the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was quite reasonable. It was quite impossible to consider either the schedule standing in the name of the hon. Member for Worcester, or that suggested by the noble Lord, the Member for Maidstone, at the present stage. But the right hon. Gentleman had adopted the principle that there should be a graduation so as to give a distinct incentive to saving on the part of those who had money of their own, or were in receipt of money in any other way, so that each grade should have something a little better than now, and at the same time secure a minimum at all events of 5s. to those who had the smallest amount. He understood the right hon. Gentleman would hold himself perfectly free and either accept one of the two schedules on the Paper, or put down a scale which would carry out the principle for which his right hon. friend the Member for East Worcestershire contended.

*MR. LEIF JONES asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to leave out of consideration the schedule on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Hexham which aimed at securing that the more a man saved the greater would be his total income.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON hoped that, as far as the guillotine Resolution permitted, there would be a discussion of the figures at a later stage. He deprecated discussing the schedule now, and asked if possible for further time to consider and discuss it.

LORD R. CECIL said that under ordinary circumstances the proper thing to do would have been to adjourn now so as to have the Government proposal in print before they voted on the next Amendment. He doubted the regularity of accepting this Amendment, which pledged the Committee to a schedule of which they knew nothing. When the Government were prepared to adopt the schedule which they thought the best he hoped they would find some way of bringing it before the Committee early.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE thought the noble Lord was rather hard on the Government. They had accepted an Amendment of a private Member, a most desirable step for a Government to take. He could not possibly formulate a schedule in four or five minutes, but would give full consideration to those of which notice had been given, and propose one on similar lines. He thought it was unreasonable to ask the Government to put a schedule on the Paper by to-morrow, which meant that it would have to be put in by eleven o'clock.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) asked that the question of the 13s. or 15s. limit should be left to the House. If some means were taken for the House to express an opinion, it would afford some guidance to the Government.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said it was usual when an Amendment was accepted to have the consequential Amendments on the notice paper, so that Members might know to what they were pledging themselves. Although it might be inconvenient the inconvenience did not arise from the Opposition side of the House. It was necessary that this point should be adjourned, and that the Committee should not be asked to pledge themselves in a manner absolutely unknown to themselves, and which left the Government to take any action they liked in respect to the schedule they put down themselves. To say that the lines of the Amendment would be followed was not sufficient or in accordance with custom.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he understood a question of order was raised, and he had to say that it was usual to have notice given of a schedule. The right hon. Gentleman had so clearly indicated his intention in this case that he thought they might accept the words proposed, and allow the schedule to be put down later.

MR. JOHN WARD asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he, when formulating the sliding scale, would give an approximate estimate of the number of people who would probably apply for pensions under the different limits, and of the amounts likely to be received by them. He took it the figures suggested by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were not actual, but relative, which was all they wanted in reference to this subject; so that they might know how much each separate item was intended to add to the cost of the scheme. He wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could promise to present approximate sums dealing with each class of pensioners, so that they might understand the schedule and its financial bearing.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he would do his best to comply with the suggestion of the hon. Member. Of course, in considering the estimates he would have to form some idea of the numbers of people who would come under the different heads of the scale, and he hoped he would be able to give some kind of computation, though it must, as the right hon. Gentleman had said, very largely be in the nature of guesswork. The estimate would, of course, be taken upon the experience of New Zealand. He hoped, however, that he would be able to do something in the direction suggested by the hon. Member before the debate closed. He trusted it might be possible for the House to express some opinion upon the suggestion of the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil, but he had already indicated that the Government could not go beyond the figure named. He hoped the Committee would allow them to get to the words of the hon. Member for Worcester. They would then take nothing else that night.

MR. WALTER LONG earnestly appealed to his hon. friends to accept the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They had had an extremely interesting and very valuable debate, conducted fairly on both sides of the House, and the Government had endeavoured to meet what was the universal opinion, and had accepted the principle of an Amendment moved from that side of the House. It was clear that, although it might be, as the hon. Member for Ashford had said, contrary to general precedent to accept an Amendment of this kind without having the schedule on the Paper, it would not be impossible to find precedents. It was impossible to produce a schedule within twenty-four hours; and the only two courses before them were either to accept the Government's suggestion or to delay the matter without being able to get any further to-morrow. He, therefore, ventured to urge that they should accept the suggestion of the Government.

MR. HAROLD COX asked whether the schedule would provide for the reductions named in the next subsection with regard to married couples living together. The adoption of the sliding scale would make considerable difference to the next subsection.

*THE CHAIRMAN said that would be a matter for consideration to-morrow.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY said that in the Bill before the Committee there was no schedule. Would the right hon. Gentleman provide time for the discussion of this new and complicated addition to the Bill?

MR ARTHUR HENDERSON endorsed what his hon. friends had said with regard to time being allowed for the discussion of the schedule. This was so important to many of them on those benches that unless the right hon. Gentleman held out some such hope they would have to have another division.

MR. LAMBTON (Durham, S. E.) asked the Prime Minister whether he could not afford time for the discussion of the schedule. It would be within the recollection of the House that the guillotine Resolution was drafted before the Second Reading, and when there was no schedule in the Bill at all. He thought it only fair that some time should be granted for the discussion of the matter.

MR. ASQUITH said he did not see any reason why they should enlarge the time already given to the Bill.

*MR. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston) asked what was the meaning of inserting the words "Part I."? Was it not intended that the second part should specify the reduced pension to be paid to couples residing in the same house? and, if so, would not the insertion of these words pledge them to the principle of reducing the pension of couples living together?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the Amendment would not prejudge the decision of the Committee with regard to the allowance to married couples dealt with in subsection 2. The Committee would come straight on to the following day. They had agreed the next day to discuss that question.

Mr. JAMES HOPE said that the only chance they had of getting a proper discussion on the schedule was to induce another place to omit it. Unless they could induce those in another place to take that course, the schedule would be passed without any discussion at all.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he did not think the question would be prejudged in the way feared supposing they put in the words "Part I. of the schedule." If they struck out, as he hoped they would, the provision about married couples, then there would be an opportunity on the Report stage to make the necessary drafting Amendments. He quite agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it would be much more convenient to take the discussion on the important question of the treatment of married couples on the proviso which stood in the Bill rather than on the words "That Part I. of the schedule stand part of the Bill."

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone) said he was unable to see any advantage in hurrying the decision through when they had really had no consideration at all about what the amounts should be. The Prime Minister had told them that it was quite impossible to extend the time, and therefore, so far as human foresight went, it was perfectly certain they would not have any opportunity of discussing the question at all. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told them the matter ought to be left to the consideration of the House, but surely it was taking away with one hand what was being given with the other if they were not to be allowed to have any voice in the schedule which was to be put in the Bill. It was nonsense to say that the House had decided in principle in favour of a sliding scale unless they knew what the effect of that decision was to be. He hoped the Government would give them time to discuss the schedule.

Mr. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided :—Ayes, 339; Noes, 108. (Division List No. 134.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J.H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.

Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, Geroge
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Patrick A. (Queen'sCo.)
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mond, A.
Montagu, Hon. E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard.)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Dowd, John
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Ponsonby, Arthur A. H. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)

Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J.W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barnes, G. N.
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Clive, Percy Archer
Clynes, J. R.
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalrymple, Viscount
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W.V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Gardner, Ernest
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E,
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Morpeth, Viscount
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n)
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, E. Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F D. (Strand)
Snowden, P.
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walsh, Stephen
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wardle, George J.
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Bowles

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put accordingly, and agreed to.

MR. ASQUITH claimed, "That the Main Question be now put."

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

And it being after Eleven of the Clock, the Chairman left the Chair to make his Report to the House.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

BLACKBURN CORPORATION BILL.

As amended, considered.

MR. HARMOOD-BANNER (Liverpool, Everton) in moving to omit subsection 3 of Clause 16, said the Bill was promoted by the Corporation of Blackburn for the purpose of extending the boundaries of the borough, and Clause 16 provided that the financial adjustment in respect of the extension as between the county council and the corporation should be made in accordance with the provisions of Sections 32 and 62 of the Local Government Act, 1888. The county council petitioned against provisions on the ground that they did not adequately provide for the equitable adjustment of the financial relations between the county and the borough, and the clause which he now moved to omit was inserted. The reason for asking for its insertion was in consequence of the decision of the House of Lords in the cases of the Urban Council of Caterham and the Rural District Council of Godstone, and the West Hartlepool Corporation and the Durham County Council. These decisions laid down that the financial adjustment between a borough and a county must not include compensation from either to the other for loss sustained by either in respect to the contributing area. He did not quite think it was an appropriate manner of dealing with the decisions of the House of Lords to insert clauses which provided in a contrary way, and especially was this the case in this instance, because there had been three Bills before the Sanitary Committee in reference to this clause, and in two cases the Police and Sanitary Committee had refused to include it. It was quite inadvisable that in two cases the law should be inserted in one way and in a third case in another, and he proposed the omission of this clause, in order that all should be dealt with in the same way. He was glad to say the Lancashire County Council had agreed that the clause should be taken out on the understanding that they were perfectly free to bring the matter up in another manner, and he quite agreed with them that it was very advisable that the question of the financial relations between county councils and boroughs should be dealt with in some fixed manner, so that there should not be the differences which had arisen on this occasion. So long as there was no fixed decision relating to these cases, there must be an interference by the county council, whenever there was an extension of a borough boundary, and an opposition by them before Parliament and the Committees which dealt with the cases. He quite agreed with the county council that there should be some agreement in regard to these financial provisions, and he would be extremely glad if the Local Government Board would take into consideration the appointment of a Committee to settle the question of the financial relations between counties and boroughs. The boroughs did not want to take advantage of the counties nor the counties of the boroughs, but they did want a settled principle on which to act. In this case his reason for asking the omission of the subsection was that in two cases the clause had not been given to the county council where boroughs had been extended. They should be uniform in their practice, and while he fully appreciated the service rendered by the Police and Sanitary Committee in the consideration of Bills which came before them, he thought it was rather by some omission than on account of their settled view that in this case they had made a difference. He understood that the county council of Lancashire would not oppose the omission of the subsection. He begged to move.

MR. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne), in seconding the Amendment, said that the issue involved in the question now before the House had already been decided by the law Courts. The decision was in accordance with commonsense. It would be absurd if the Blackburn Corporation were to be put in a different position from others in this connection. It would mean that towns where the circumstances were similar were to be treated differently, not on the merits of the particular cases, but merely because of a catch vote given by Members attending certain Committees of this House. He hoped the House would pass the Amendment unanimously. If the law was to be altered, let it be done in the proper way.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out subsection 3."—(*Mr. Harmood-Banner.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

*MR. HELME (Lancashire, Lancaster), on behalf of the County Council of Lancashire stated the considerations which had guided Committees in dealing with these important questions in the past. On the passing of the Local Government Act, 1888, establishing the county councils and county boroughs, the consideration of its working was referred to a number of Commissioners, of whom the then Lord Derby was one, and, interpreting what they thought at the time was the meaning of Parliament, they laid down certain principles which should be adopted with regard to the adjustment of the financial relations between boroughs and counties when a borough absorbed a portion of a county in the extension of boundaries. That arrangement had worked smoothly, satisfactorily and uniformly, up to last year when the House of Lords gave a decision on appeal. The effect of this was to upset local area finance in such a manner as to amount in some cases to injustice. The real question was whether or not, in the best interests of local government, when changes were required in the county areas from time to time they should not be carried out on conditions avoiding injustice to any section of the people, and leave the ratepayers affected *in statu quo* from the financial point of view. The county council desired that this matter should be carefully considered. He recognised the fairness of the position taken by the hon. Member for Liverpool, and on behalf of the county council he reciprocated the desire to secure a just settlement. It was not a monetary advantage they sought. It was most desirable to prevent the cost of argument before Parliamentary Committees: so he did not oppose the Amendment, but urged that the Government should take the whole matter into consideration with a view of securing uniformity for the future equitable to all the interests involved.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. EMMOTT, Oldham) said that the subject was a complicated and difficult one arising out of certain instructions given in a subsection of Clause 32 of the Local Government Act of 1888. The instructions, if not self-contradictory, were extremely difficult to interpret. The Commissioners who dealt with the adjustment of these matters found them so difficult to interpret that they adopted the very English expedient of "splitting the difference." The practical settlement which they came to lasted for a good many years, until the basis of it was upset last year by the decision of the House of Lords. That being the case, a new factor was introduced in the Committees upstairs. In the present session in two cases Committees had refused to insert this clause, and in the case under discussion, that of Blackburn, the Committee decided by a narrow majority that it should be inserted. If he might venture to say so, he thought the county council was acting very wisely in not, on this occasion, opposing the elimination of this particular subsection, but at the same time they were bound to bring the matter forward in order to have it authoritatively decided. The real reason why he had risen was for the purpose of remarking that the question was so difficult that he thought the Local Government Board ought to give a lead to the House in the matter. If new legislation was required to settle the difficulty it was for them to introduce it. If it could be settled in some other way without legislation, they should consider the question most carefully, so that when some other opportunity arose they would be prepared to advise the House upon it. There was one other reason why the matter should be settled. Since the decision of the House of Lords, every administrative county council must of necessity oppose every extension of boroughs or urban districts, and surely it was desirable in the highest degree that such a cause of friction should be removed from our local government.

LORD BALCARRES said that this was a matter which affected the county districts in Lancashire very seriously indeed. At the present moment it was only in

Lancashire that this problem had arisen, but under the new conditions created by the decision of the House of Lords it affected the whole of England. So far from this being a case of the county trying to get money out of the ratepayers, he would point out that under this clause the county of Lancashire stood to lose money. It was purely on the question of principle that the matter had been brought before the House of Commons. They were not going to press it to a division, largely on the advice of the Chairman of Committees. This new principle was going to affect in the next year or two every county council in England, and, almost without exception, every urban district. He wished the House to realise that under the old system, anomalous as it might have been, for the last sixteen years the adjustments had worked with complete success, and if every exception proposed in the future was going to be opposed in practice all sorts of difficulties were bound to arise. There would be absolute chaos, Parliamentary litigation would be necessary, and it would cost far more than the amount of money which was affected in rateable values. It was, therefore, best that both parties should come to an agreement quickly. The Local Government Board would suffer above all others by this friction, because it would depend upon them whether those matters were fought to an issue. Owing to the experience of the officials of the Lancashire County Council and the people who represented the towns they had been hitherto able to avoid this friction entirely. He begged the President of the Local Government Board to appoint a Departmental Committee or a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons forthwith, but he was afraid that legislation would be required to change the judgment of the House of Lords. The real point was to avoid friction. Every county Member would support the Government, and every urban district, except the few which hoped to get hold of a profitable piece of land, leaving the unprofitable ground to the county.

MR. WHITBREAD (Huntingdonshire, Huntingdon) wished to reinforce as strongly as he could what had fallen from the hon. Member for Chorley. He was able to speak on behalf of the County Councils Association, and he urged that this was a matter which affected the rural communities throughout the country. No one on that side of the House would propose anything that would be in the nature of an impediment to the growth and extension of the urban communities of the country, but it was eminently desirable when promoting that growth that any possible hardship, or feeling of hardship, to the rural communities should be avoided. The decision of the House of Lords, and the consequent decision of the Committees on Private Bills, had excited in the minds of those who had to administer local government very grave apprehensions as to what was to come forth; and he urged the Local Government Board without delay either to appoint a Select Committee or in some other manner to clear up the situation which confronted both the rural and the urban districts in the country.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.) said he rejoiced in the comparative measure of agreement which had been come to on this particular question, by which the House would not be put to the trouble of a division. He wanted every party in the House to be quite clear that in their decision on this matter the Local Government Board were not in the least degree prejudging the general question in one way or the other. They considered that there was much to be said for the old system, and also much to be said for the system introduced through the judgment of the House of Lords last year. And they had no wish to turn the debate into a discussion of the general question. They recognised the change in the situation, they recognised the difficulty the noble Lord had pointed out in the possible breaking up of the harmony which up to the present had prevailed in these matters, and they recognised especially that the Private Bill Committee and Police and Sanitary Committee under present circumstances were put in an almost impossible position, because this question had been argued again and again before them at considerable expense, and this session the Police and Sanitary Committee had reversed the decision on one Bill which they had come to on another, so that they had three Bills coming before the House of Lords without this provision and one with it, although the conditions were exactly similar in every case. That meant, of course, the abandonment of rational methods, and therefore they asked the House to support the Amendment. Although he was not in a position to promise definitely either a Select Committee or legislation, the matter would have the serious consideration of the Local Government Board, who would listen to all representations made by the various parties concerned, and it was extremely probable that some way would be found by which a perpetual divergence of interest between the boroughs and counties on every private Bill which was promoted might be avoided.

VISCOUNT MORPETH (Birmingham, S.) said the hon. Gentleman had said that they would have serious consideration and sympathy, but they were the words used to every deputation that went to a Government Department which had no intention of taking any action whatever. It was very unfortunate that so little response should be made to the appeal which had been addressed to the hon. Gentleman's department. The hon. Member who had spoken for the Lancashire County Council had said it was his earnest hope that there should be mutual goodwill. That was the object of all people interested in local government, but in business matters and the expenditure of money something more was wanted—a little business common-sense, and some regulation should be made by the competent authority appointing Committees of the House in dealing with the matter, so that in one session there should not be decisions given in opposite directions at the same time. The matter did not affect only Lancashire, but every county council and borough in the kingdom. It was most regrettable in the interests of local government that the Local Government Board should not realise the importance of the question, and should make no effort to arrive at an authoritative decision with regard to what they were going to do, because he supposed there was a majority in favour of the Amendment, otherwise Lancashire would not have surrendered rather tamely. It was a very unsatisfactory dealing with the matter that it should be left to catch votes in Committee and in the House.

MR. ADKINS (Lancashire, Middleton) did not quite agree that the Local Government Board could be convicted of not seriously caring about the matter. Though agreeing as to the very great importance of the matter, he did not think it would really be advanced by the House going to a division, not because of any subtle computations as to the result of the division, but because of the fact that two Bills were going to the other House without this clause in it, and to send up three Bills which were inconsistent would lead to the matter being postponed rather than being dealt with as promptly as they would wish. Therefore, accepting the statement of his hon. friend, who might not be in a position to pledge the Government, he would ask them in a few days what they had decided to do, and he hoped hon. Members on both sides would exercise every legitimate form of pressure to see that the Government took some prompt measure, because the present position led to spending far more public money in the Committees upstairs than if there were a decision of the question on either side.

Question put, and Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read the third time.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put.

Adjourned at ten minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 24th June, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with :—Widnes Corporation.

The same was ordered to lie on the Table.

Margate Corporation Bill.—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the opposition to the Bill was withdrawn. The Orders made on 20th May last and the 16th instant discharged, and Bill committed.

West London, Barnes, and Richmond Tramways Bill [H.L.].—The CHAIRMAN of COMMITTEES informed the House that the Promoters do not intend to proceed further with the Bill. The Orders made on 18th May last and the 16th instant discharged. Ordered, that the Bill be not further proceeded with.

Manchester Corporation Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—Reports from His Majesty's Attorney-General received, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]; Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—House in Committee (according to order). The Amendments proposed by the Committee made. Standing Committee negatived. The report of the Amendments to be received to-morrow.

EDUCATION BOARD PROVISIONAL ORDERS CONFIRMATION (CORNWALL, ETC.) BILL [H.L.]

Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Viscount Halifax: "That it be an instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council Order."

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I moved the adjournment of this debate simply in order to give my noble friend behind me, Viscount Halifax, time to get the information which the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies said would constitute a new fact and enable the Board of Education to reconsider their decision. I now beg to ask my noble friend whether he has obtained the information and can give it to the House.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: My Lords, as the mover of the Motion I believe I should, according to the rules of the House, have a right of reply at the conclusion of the other speeches, but I would ask the permission of the House to make now such statement as I have to make rather than by way of reply at the end of the discussion, especially as that course will greatly facilitate matters, and, I hope, lead to a settlement of this question. Your Lordships will remember that when I first brought this matter to the attention of the House my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies did not dispute the facts. I, therefore, do not desire to detain the House for more than a few minutes, but, in view of what I have to say later, I will, very shortly, recapitulate the facts.

The facts, briefly, were that improvements having been required in the school at East Hardwick the managers submitted plans for these improvements which were approved by the Inspector of the Board of Education and by the architect of the local education authority; that there was delay in providing a playground, not due to any fault on the part of the managers but to the circumstances under which the trust was held and consequent negotiations; that eventually the managers did succeed in obtaining the precise site for the playground that had been suggested by the local education authority; that, nevertheless, the local education authority, after retaining the plans for improving the school for something like two years, gave notice of their

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

intention to compel the building of a new provided school; that the ratepayers and inhabitants of East Hardwick, who had previously sent up a petition, signed by every ratepayer and the parent of every child attending the school, to the Board of Education against the proposed action of the local education authority, at once held a public meeting to protest against the decision of that authority; that the meeting was absolutely unanimous in its condemnation of the proposal; that the local education authority persisted in its determination to compel the erection of a new provided school, although it was not denied that adequate school accommodation could, and would, have been provided by improvements in the existing school without any expense at all to the ratepayers; that the erection of the proposed new provided school would raise the education rate in this poor little village hamlet from 8d. to 1s. 8d. in the £; that the managers appealed to Mr. McKenna, then President of the Board of Education, who refused to upset the decision of the local education authority; that Mr. McKenna did not grant a local inquiry in accordance with his powers, nor consider, as he was bound to do under Section 9 of the Education Act of 1902, the interests of secular education, which could have been amply provided for in the existing school, or the wishes of the parents, which were being entirely disregarded, or the economy of the rates, which were being more than doubled by this proposal; that the managers applied to the local education authority to send down a deputation in order to look into the circumstances of the case on the spot, which the local education authority refused to do; that the managers then requested the Board of Education to receive a representative deputation from the parish on the subject, which was also refused, the managers being informed that Mr. McKenna had already decided that there must be a provided school and that it was useless to reopen the question; that the managers were then enabled, by the generosity of a lady living in the neighbourhood, to offer to build a new school themselves free of cost to the parish; that this offer was also refused by the Board of Education, who replied again that there must be a council school, and by the local education authority, who asked why the lady in question should be allowed to purchase the privilege of educating the children of this little hamlet in the doctrines which she herself professed, the fact being that during the 250 years of the existence of this school it had been a Church school and the managers were only asking to be allowed to continue it on its old lines; and, lastly, that the feeling against the proposed school in the parish is so strong that no one will sell land or the necessary site and the Board of Education is, in consequence, now proposing to take compulsory powers to compel a gentleman residing two and a half miles away to sell land in the parish for the purpose.

Those are the facts of the case. They have been admitted by everyone. My noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whose courtesy in this matter I wish to acknowledge, admitted that the case was not an easy one to defend. It was, he said, a very nicely- balanced case, and he could not indeed say what his own decision would have been. He would, he said, have been in considerable doubt. My Lords, I am quite certain that my noble friend would not have been in doubt at all; and I am equally sure that he must have found it a very difficult and uncongenial task to venture upon the sort of justification put into his mouth for the conduct of the Board of Education, when he attempted to say that up to 18th May, 1907, there had been no whisper of the willingness of the managers to build a new school, and to suggest that there might have been some doubt as to the genuineness of the offer when it was made. Of course, there had been no such whisper. Up to 18th May last year the managers had every right to suppose that the plans submitted for the improvement of the existing school would be accepted. There could be no kind of reason for offering to build a new school until all hope of carrying out such improvements was at an end; and when that hope was definitely taken from them the managers, as a matter of fact, within less than a fortnight did offer to build a new school without any expense to the ratepayers.

As to the genuineness of that offer I desire to draw your Lordships' attention to this point, in justice to Miss Neilson—there can be no reason why the name of this public-spirited and generous lady should not be mentioned—that the vicar of the parish, who was acting for the managers and had come up to London to see the authorities at the Board of Education with the offer to build a new school, wired to her on 21st August of last year as follows—

> "Board of Education refuse your offer. Must be a council school."

The vicar did not see Mr. McKenna himself, but was told at the Board of Education that the President had made up his mind that there must be a council school. On 18th September the local education authority wrote to the vicar—

> "Your letter of 27th August, stating that the managers are prepared to build a new school if the local education authority will withdraw their notice to erect a council school, has been considered."—

How, in the face of that, can they say there was no offer—

> "I beg to inform you that the local education authority adhere to their proposal."

I think, in the face of those documents, neither the Board of Education nor the local education authority will venture again to suggest that any doubt exists as to the genuineness of the offer to build a new school, or that there was any delay in that offer being made.

It will be in your Lordships' recollection that the debate on the Second Reading of this Bill was adjourned, on the Motion of my noble friend Lord Heneage, in consequence of the Secretary of State for the Colonies having stated, in answer to my appeal to him to admit that the case was one which it was impossible to defend and that compulsory powers ought not to be granted, against the wishes of all concerned, to take land for this purpose, that if this lady was willing to renew her offer to build a school, such willingness on her part would be a new circumstance which would enable the matter to be reconsidered. I must say I am entirely at a loss to understand how the renewal of precisely the same offer which was deliberately refused by the Board of Education and the local education authority when it was made, constitutes a new fact in the circumstances of the case. But if my noble friend the Secretary of State for the Colonies likes to consider it as such, and is prepared, in consequence, on behalf of the Board of Education, to abandon the proposal to take compulsory powers to acquire land for the purpose of forcing a new provided school upon the parish, I certainly shall not quarrel with his opinion and shall be very glad to withdraw my Motion.

I was not in a position at the time to give any definite assurance as to Miss Neilson's willingness to renew her offer. I think there are grave reasons why she might very well have hesitated to do so. What security has she as to the future? I have been in communication with this lady on the subject, and I am now in a position to inform the noble Earl that she is willing to renew her offer, and to build a school on the plan of the neighbouring Wentbridge School, which has been approved by the local education authority, to accommodate forty-two children—a proposal more than ample in view of the fact that there are only thirty-two children attending the East Hardwicke School. Further, I am in a position to inform the noble Earl that Mr. Thornton, whose land the Board of Education were proposing to take compulsorily for the purpose of the council schools, is quite willing to sell his land to Miss Neilson in order to further the building of the new Church school. I think, these facts point a moral—and I do not say that in the least in a party spirit—which I hope His Majesty's Government will lay to heart.

May I, before sitting down, say that it is quite impossible that there can be peace in regard to this education question unless the denominational schools are treated fairly? We only ask equal justice for them. Your Lordships see how the school at East Hardwicke has been treated by the local education authority, and how little support the managers received from the Board of Education; and I want to emphasise this point by giving the House one or two figures which are very instructive. The West Riding County Council, in the three years ended March, 1907, have spent £22,776 in repairing council schools, which number 360; in the same period the amount spent by them for this purpose on 540 voluntary schools has been exactly £99. In the three years they spent £3,476 in furnishing council schools; in the same period they spent, on furnishing voluntary schools, £201.

Just one other fact. There are ninety elected members of the West Riding County Council, thirty of whom were returned in order to see that justice should be done to voluntary schools. There are forty-eight members of the Education Committee, but only five of those members of the county council who desire to preserve the rights of the voluntary schools have been placed upon that Committee. To show what the result of this unfair treatment is I would mention that five seats held by Radical members have in recent bye-elections gone to those who wish to see justice done to voluntary schools. It is the same lesson as is to be learnt from the Pudsey election. We all want to see peace in this matter, but we cannot have peace if we are treated with such gross injustice. I ask the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies to give me an assurance that in Committee the portion of this Bill taking compulsory powers for the acquisition of a site for a council school in East Hardwicke will be withdrawn, that being the nature of the arrangement which I understood him to suggest in the event of the offer being renewed.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I desire to draw immediate attention to the fact that I am entirely out of order, as I have already spoken on the Motion of my noble friend opposite; and I do so at once in case either my noble and learned friend on the Woolsack or some other noble Lord should consider it a duty to refer to the fact. My noble friend opposite has gone through the history of this case as he conceives it to be. I must put in a word of caution to the effect that I do not accept his historical *resume* as being entirely accurate in every respect; but we are not likely to agree upon this point.

There are just one or two points, however, to which I must draw attention. I will not dwell on the fact that the noble Viscount said that my right hon. friend Mr. McKenna had broken the law in not paying proper attention to Section 9 of the Act of 1902, because, as I must repeat once more, a discretion on the part of the Minister for Education is provided for by that section, and he is able to lay just as much or as little stress as he pleases upon any of the three points to which his attention is drawn by that section. But there is another point upon which I should like to say a word. All the administrative Acts of the Board of Education are the work of the Board, and the Board is, therefore, very unwilling to draw attention to the opinion, one way or another, of its inspectors in any particular case. Whether the Board be right or wrong, it clearly is not proper that it should shift any of its responsibility on to the shoulders of its officers. In this particular case a great deal of complaint has been made that the action of the Board—I am speaking of the Board, and not of what may have been done by the West Riding County Council—was in some way contrary to the report of their inspectors. That is really not the case.

What did happen was this. At a quite early stage of the proceedings it is true that one of the Board's inspectors, in a conversation with the managers, drew attention to certain points which he considered might be improvements; but he certainly did not definitely state that those improvements would be found satisfactory by the Board. The managers, I am quite willing to admit, no doubt relied to some extent upon what the inspector then said; but when these proposed alterations were submitted in a concrete form they were not found, in the opinion of the Board, to be satisfactory, and the Board then adopted its usual administrative action. It twice referred the question to its local inspector, and the action which was ultimately taken by the Board in saying that these repairs would not create a satisfactory school was in accordance with the opinion of their local inspector. I am anxious to make that clear, because it is one of the points upon which the noble Viscount laid stress.

The position in which we stand is this. At the close of the last debate I was in a position to say that if the noble Viscount was able to give us an assurance that the very liberal and benevolent lady, whose name he has to-day been able to mention, would come forward with an offer for a new school we should regard that as a new fact. The noble Viscount says it is not a new fact, but certainly the Board of Education did not understand, on the occasion when, in the month of August, the vicar of the parish came to London and had a conversation with them, that what would be, in business, called a firm offer of a new school was being made. It is quite possible there may have been a misunderstanding on both sides, but that certainly was the opinion of the Board.

Now, however, a firm offer is made on the responsibility of my noble friend, and, as it is made, I, of course, am prepared to carry out my part of the bargain on behalf of the Board of Education. As a question of form, it does not very much matter whether this particular part of the Bill goes before the Committee or not; but, at any rate, it will not be proceeded with there, in order to give time for the preparation and submission to the Board of Education of the necessary plans, which have, of course, to be approved by the Board as well as by the local education authority, and in order that the whole matter may be completed. I shall be, like other noble Lords, I am sure, very glad if the matter is ultimately concluded in this way; and I hope the noble Lord will now allow the Bill to go to the Committee.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: I think I have a right to ask that the clause dealing with compulsory powers should not be passed.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: It will be withdrawn in Committee.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: I gladly withdraw my Motion on the strength of that assurance.

THE LORD BISHOP OF BANGOR: My Lords, I was informed about two days ago of a certain case of hardship in regard to another school in Merionethshire, and I should like to ask the noble Earl whether there will be an opportunity for bringing that forward. [The right rev. Prelate was here greeted with cries of "Order," and resumed his seat.]

LORD ASHBOURNE: The noble Earl has expressed his willingness to make the arrangement suggested by the noble Viscount, but I do not think the withdrawal of his Motion by the noble Viscount would be the way to carry it out.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I understood the noble Earl to promise that the clause should be withdrawn in Committee.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Yes.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: That is a pledge on the part of the Government, and we can, of course, rely upon it.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: In reply to the right rev. Prelate, I may say that I have no knowledge of the case to which he refers, or whether or not it is included in this particular Bill.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the County Borough of Swansea (Orders Nos. 1 and 2).

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES (ANNUAL).

No. 561. Ceylon.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

No. 4032. Greece (Piræus and District).

No. 4033. Austria-Hungary (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

No. 4034. Greece (Thessaly).

No. 4035. United States (New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Connecticut).

No. 4036. China (Ningpo).

No. 4037. Italy (Finances of Italy).

No. 4038. United States (Consular District of Boston).

No. 4039. United States (Consular district of Galveston).

No. 4040. Turkey (Monastir).

No. 4041. Japan (North Formosa).

No. 4042. China (Nanking).

NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND ACT, 1906.

First Report to the Secretary for Scotland by the Board of Trustees for the National Galleries of Scotland, for the period from 1st April, 1907, to 31st December, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL AND TRAVERS' FOUNDATION.

Statement of the estimated income and expenditure of Greenwich Hospital and of Travers' Foundation, for the year 1908–1909.

MOTOR CAR ACTS, 1896 AND 1903.

Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland prohibiting the driving of motor cars on the road in County Dublin from Malahide to the Velvet Strand.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS, 1853–1891 (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Licence granted by His Majesty to Cecilia Shirley, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the London Female and Preventive Reformatory Institution Branch Home, 35, Eden Grove, Holloway, N.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under Section 2 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, stating: That the provisions of the Greenock Corporation Order are of such a character that they ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order. That, having regard to Section 16 (2) of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, the provisions of Clauses 52 and 54 of the Perth Corporation Order ought not to be dealt with by Provisional Order under that Act. That, save as aforesaid, the several Draft Provisional Orders be allowed to proceed subject to such recommendations as they may hereafter make with respect to the several Orders.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (UNIVERSITY COURT ORDINANCES).

No. 26. (Glasgow, No. 7).—Regulations for Higher Degrees in Arts and Science.

No. 27. (Glasgow, No. 8).—Regulations as to Bursaries, Scholarships, and Fellowships.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 109.)

STANDING ORDERS OF THE HOUSE.

Ordered that the Rules made Standing Orders of the House on Monday last be entered on the Roll of Standing Orders, and be printed. (No. 110.)

LOCAL TAXATION.

*THE EARL OF ONSLOW rose to call attention to the additional duties imposed by Parliament during recent years upon local authorities, and to the increased burdens thereby thrown upon urban and rural rates and upon the members and officials of county and other councils; and to move for Papers.

The noble Earl said: My Lords, I feel that I owe some apology to your Lordships for bringing the question of local taxation under the consideration of the House, seeing that it was introduced only last session by my noble friend Lord Denbigh and that I am speaking in the presence of a number of noble Lords who are far more conversant with the subject than I am and far better able to put it before your Lordships. I am quite aware that in your Lordships' House is the noble Lord who presided with great ability, for a series of years, over the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into local taxation; and if there were nothing else as a monument of his industry and of the contributions towards the public weal which the noble

Lord has made, I think the Report of that Commission would be sufficient to perpetuate his name. Then I see before me a noble Lord who has recently come up to this House, whom we knew better as Sir Henry Fowler; and also the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who has devoted a lifetime to the interests of local government.

In such company I feel that I have a difficult task to perform, and I should not have ventured to bring the matter before your Lordships had there been any possibility of getting it properly discussed in another place. There was an opportunity for such a discussion when the consideration of the Finance Bill was before the other House, and I am very sorry indeed that this question, standing by itself, was not taken into consideration and a full debate had upon it. I might then have been spared inflicting the speech which I am about to inflict upon your Lordships. But, unfortunately, the issue was mixed up with another of a more important political and party character, with the result that the question of local taxation went very much into the background. The noble Lord, Lord Newton, said the other night that your Lordships' House would soon be the only place where there could be free and full discussion in the presence of His Majesty's Ministers and where we could get an expression of opinion from those Ministers, and I think that the present is one of those instances when our only opportunity is to bring the matter forward in this House.

The history of the relations between local and Imperial taxation is a very long one, but I will promise your Lordships to make my history as short as may be and to deal as far as possible with round figures. The present position of affairs is really the outcome of a chapter of accidents, and largely because the ratepayer has no friend either at the Treasury or at Somerset House. His claims upset the symmetry of the Budgets of Chancellors of the Exchequer. He is open to the plunder of every humanitarian and every philanthropist. He is supposed to have a guardian in the President of the Local Government Board, but I am afraid that the control of that Department is confined to protecting the ratepayer against himself. The President of the Local Government Board may, it is true, intervene where local authorities seek to incur heavy debts and responsibilities, but when Parliament seeks to put additional duties and burdens upon him, it is very rarely that the ratepayer finds a defender in the person of the President of the Local Government Board.

Your Lordships are well aware that in the days of Queen Elizabeth it was the intention of Parliament that all these local matters should be borne by every man according to his ability. In 1834, for the first time, there was a small contribution from Imperial taxation to local burdens, but it was not until the late Mr. Pell advocated, with pertinacity and persistency, the claims of the ratepayer, that we began to get a substantial contribution from Imperial funds. After the House of Commons had unanimously passed a Resolution that no further delay ought to occur, we at last got grants in aid amounting to some £3,000,000. Then the county councils were established, and in the year 1888 certain Imperial revenues were assigned for the relief of local taxation. They were described by Mr. Goschen as "wisely chosen items of taxation," and the amount was something like £5,000,000. They rose to over £6,000,000 in 1894–5, and to £7,500,000 in 1906–7; but, before any payment was made, £1,000,000 was deducted for certain specified purposes paid by the Exchequer direct. To this must be added £1,300,000, which was given in consequence of the Act of 1896 for the relief of agricultural land, and £11,500,000, which was given for education on the passing of the Act of 1902.

That was, undoubtedly, a very material relief, but it did not by any means come up to the expectations formed either by those who were to receive the relief or even by the Chancellor of the Exchequer who induced Parliament to grant it. The county councils were assured that the Exchequer contributions would cover the sums which had been previously paid out of the local grants for the cost of union officers and for all general county purposes. I think evidence of that is to be found in the very elaborate provisions contained in the measure for the appropriation of what was expected to be the balance after all those charges had been met. I do not think there has ever been any balance. That was the position of affairs down to the appointment of the Royal Commission over which my noble friend Lord Balfour of Burleigh presided. That Commission was asked whether all kinds of real and personal property contribute equitably to local taxation, and their answer was—

> "Funds for national services ought to be raised in accordance with the principle of ability, and the grievances we have set forth cannot be remedied without either a direct contribution from the Exchequer or the extension of the system of assigned revenues."

The increase of the rates has been going up by leaps and bounds, and is out of all proportion to the increase of population.

In twenty years our expenditure on education has sextupled, and is now nearly £20,000,000. On Poor Law we spend £3,750,000 more than we did twenty years ago. In 1885 the cost was 6s. 3d. per head of the population; to-day it is 8s. 2d. per head. Our lunatics cost us twice as much, and so do the police and public lighting. Establishment and legal charges have also doubled. The total increase in twenty years is £34,000,000, about half of which is on education alone, while the amount raised locally for education is 173 per cent. in excess of what it was twenty years ago. At the same time municipal indebtedness is increasing with equal rapidity. It is well over £500,000,000 for the United Kingdom, and, added to the National Debt, our total borrowings are upwards of £1,340,000,000. I am well aware that a large amount of that is invested in remunerative undertakings, but, notwithstanding, it leaves a huge debt.

What has been the result of all this expenditure? Can we point to any diminution in the cost of police, the administration of the Poor Law, or in the charges for the maintenance of lunatics? Can it even be shown that the increased charges for those branches of local administration are only keeping pace with the increase of population? I think not. I think your Lordships will find that, notwithstanding all the money that has been spent, the amount of pauperism and lunacy is advancing even faster than the expenditure on what are known as national services—poor relief, education, police, and main roads. They take £41,500,000 out of the £107,000,000 which is spent by local authorities, while the contribution received from the Exchequer is only £17,000,000.

I recognise that considerable relief was given by the Agricultural Rates Act of 1896. The Commission which inquired into the condition of agriculture recommended that agricultural land should be rated at only one-quarter of its value, but the Act laid upon it a charge amounting to one-half, and the Local Government Board was directed to determine the amount to be taken for the expenditure of each spending authority. The rateable value of agricultural land at Lady Day, 1899, was £24,000,000, and it was calculated upon that valuation. The grant is equivalent to an average of 1s. 0¼d. in the £. We were told that agricultural land was to be relieved of one-half of its rating. This meant one-half then, but not one-half now. The rates on agricultural land have gone on continually rising, while the amount received in aid remains exactly the figure fixed in 1895–6. In 1896–7 the deficiency in the rates of local authorities was £1,333,000, and the grant was exactly equivalent to that; in 1904–5 the deficiency was £3,362,000, while the grant remained practically the same, leaving a deficit to be raised by rates of over £2,000,000.

In the seven years since the Royal Commission reported much water has flowed under the bridges and much money has flowed out of the ratepayers' pockets. The recommendations of that Commission have been accentuated by what has taken place since, I regret very much that it is not possible to bring the statement of expenditure quite up to date, because the Reports of the Local Government Board do not appear until some two years after the expenditure which they record has been incurred. But the cost to the ratepayers of education the year before the Commission reported was

£4,000,000; in 1904–5, the last year of which we have the returns, the amount taken from local sources was £8,000,000. Poor relief before the Royal Commission sat represented £7,000,000; in 1904–5 it had increased to £11,000,000. The total cost of education in 1904–5 was £15,500,000, but in 1905–6 it had risen to £20,500,000.

The Royal Commission recommended that the local taxation of the country should fall upon each person in accordance with his ability, and I am well aware that it is a very difficult question how you can best test the ability of any man to bear his share of rates and taxes. A Return was prepared—I am sorry it has not been brought up to date—by Lord Milner when he was at the Inland Revenue, showing the amount of property which passed by will in this country, rateable and non-rateable; and, roughly speaking, rateable property is 25 per cent. and non-rateable 75 per cent. Therefore your Lordships may take it that the rateable property in this country is one-fourth of the whole.

What were the principal complaints which the Royal Commission had to inquire into? The first was, on behalf of the ratepayers in general, that there was thrown on the rates too much of the cost of certain national services, the burden of which ought consequently to be borne on the broader back of the taxpayer. Secondly, complaint was made, on behalf of a special class of ratepayers, that as they required for their business an amount of rateable property very large in proportion to their general ability, an undue share of local burdens was imposed upon them. I have the figures here of a typical agricultural county—Norfolk. What is the position in which they find themselves? The Commission was informed, in the year 1898, that the Exchequer contribution paid all the county expenses which were national in their character with the exception of main roads, and that a rate of 6d. in the £ was all that it was necessary to levy in Norfolk, all of which was expended on the roads. But since then there has been a very remarkable increase in the amount which has to be raised. The total amount raised in Norfolk by rate in 1897–8, the date of the Royal Commission, was £39,000, necessitating a rate of 6½d. in the £; in 1903–4 it was necessary to raise £83,000 and to impose a rate of 1s. 3d. in the £; and for 1908–9 it is estimated that the amount required to be raised will be £118,000, representing a rate of 1s. 8¾d. Your Lordships will see that that is a very remarkable change, even from the state of things which existed at the time of the Report of the Royal Commission; yet it was stated before that Commission that if it were possible to obtain figures of the net profit received from the cultivation of land it would be shown how excessive was the burden of rates upon land in Norfolk.

I have also obtained from a friend of mine a continuation of some figures which he placed before the Royal Commission affecting his own estate. I allude to Mr. Pretyman, the late Secretary to the Admiralty, who, as your Lordships are aware, is the owner of a large agricultural estate in Suffolk. That estate is a particularly interesting one. Not only is it a large estate—I think the rent roll is something like £16,000 a year—but Mr. Pretyman has farmed for many years past a great portion of it himself. The Return which Mr. Pretyman has furnished to me in continuation of that which he gave to the Royal Commission shows rates and taxes amounting to from £2,000 to £2,500 a year, while the profit which he has received out of the estate has been only £1,500 a year. And though these figures of rates and profits are worthy of notice, what is more remarkable is that upon that same estate no less than £368,000 has been expended in labour during the past eleven years, or an average of nearly £33,500 per annum. Surely an undertaking, whatever it may be—whether it is that unfortunate form of property which is subject to so much obloquy in this country, landed estate, or factories or anything else—which involves such an expenditure on the employment of labour ought not to be crushed out by an undue burden of rates and taxes.

May I stop for a moment to inquire to what is attributable this increase? I think it is mainly due to the increased duties which Parliament has put upon local authorities. I have said something about the increased duties placed upon them by the Education Acts, but there have been many other Acts of Parliament passed in recent years relating to matters which are undoubtedly national and not local — isolation hospitals, reformatory schools, unemployed workmen, the notification of births, and the medical examination, to be followed probably by and by by the medical treatment, of school children. And, last of all, there is the Act for which the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture was responsible—the Small Holdings Act. Only a small beginning has been made with it, but the expenditure in most counties has already run into three or four figures. Then there is now before Parliament the Town Planning Bill, which proposes to put still further burdens on the ratepayers.

It is a curious fact that we hear no real and serious complaint in any part of the country of the unduly oppressive nature of Imperial taxation. It is high, but it is borne without serious grumbling, and indeed the Chancellor of the Exchequer is being continually pressed to make contributions for some one or other object. In all parts of the country, however, one hears complaints that the ratepayer is being unduly burdened. It is often said that the taxpayer ought not to be called upon to provide money to be expended by the local authority. Surely, if that is so, it must be equally true that Parliament, which is not representative of the ratepayer, although, perhaps, he may also be a Parliamentary elector, ought not to impose burdens upon the ratepayer against his direct consent.

The chief sufferers are the agricultural community. I am curious to know whether the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture has urged upon his colleagues generally, and particularly upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the injustice which the present arrangement inflicts upon those whom his Department is supposed especially to represent and protect. As I have filled the office of President of the Board of Agriculture the noble Earl may perhaps ask whether I took that step. Yes, my Lords, I did. I was very deeply impressed by the burdens of local taxation placed upon the farmer in this country, and if the opportunity had occurred, if we had had a surplus, we should certainly have done something to relieve the rates. But we did not have a surplus; we had a deficit. When we might have had a surplus the noble Lord will remember that a pledge was given to Parliament that the Budget should raise no new fiscal issue. It was carried out on the old traditions, and we were precluded, by that undertaking, from raising additional taxation to deal with this particular question. The noble Earl opposite is deeply interested in small holdings and the measure which he passed into law last session has been described as one which administered ginger to the local authorities. I do not think the local authorities want anything of the kind. What they want is oil from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They want to do their duty, they want to carry out the Act which my noble friend has passed; and when they are recalcitrant it is due to the feeling that they are the trustees of the money of those who elected them to the county councils, and they are unwilling to embark upon additional expense unless they can see greater assistance from the Imperial Exchequer.

There is another aspect of this question —namely, the increased work which is being put upon local authorities. I have the greatest possible admiration for the amount of voluntary service which is given in this country on county councils. I remember when I had the honour of being a member of the London County Council that there was one gentleman—he is still on the Council and has been honoured by the Sovereign—who devoted himself entirely to the administration of the lunatic asylums. I was told that he knew every lunatic by sight and nearly every lunatic by name. I can imagine no more unpleasant or uninteresting task, yet none which conduces more to the welfare of those whom we have unfortunately to support. I confess I feel there is a danger that with this increased duty we shall no longer be able to get the same class of men to do the work of the county councils, and that work may pass into the hands of the officials. I remember complaining once at the London County Council that we were going away, as I thought, for too long a holiday, and the officials answered—

> "You must remember that there must be some time in which to do the business of London."

There is another consideration. Up to now we have prided ourselves on the purity of our local authorities. Is that going to be always maintained? Do we not see ominous indications, I will not say of corruption, but of an indisposition to maintain the local administrative purity to which we have been accustomed, especially in the great communities in and bordering upon the Metropolis? What are the remedies for this state of things? I venture to think that there is only one remedy, and that is the removal of the injustice whereby forms of wealth other than real property are exempt from their fair share of public burdens. The Agricultural Rates Act has not fulfilled the promise which was made to the ratepayer, and he fears that the assigned revenues, which have now been done away with and an amount fixed at the exact sum payable in the year 1907, may fall into the same category. Last year the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that in future any increase from the local taxation licences and Custom and Excise duties will go to the Exchequer and not to the local authorities, while any increase in the local burden will have to be borne by the ratepayers. Yet the Royal Commission distinctly said that in those assigned revenues you had a property capable of development, which might be made the means of affording considerable relief of the burdens of local taxation, and they estimated the amount of that relief, to begin with, at between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 a year. That, however, has been swept away by the determination to retain the grant at the figure at which it stood in the year 1907.

Everyone, I think, agrees that national service ought to be met out of the Exchequer, and that as far as possible the administration as well as the cost should be taken away. What is the answer we have received from His Majesty's Government? We are told that nothing can be done until we have had a Valuation Bill. It may be that some real property does not pay as much as it ought and that as between owners of real property there may be some inequality, but that is a mere bagatelle compared with the burdens borne by real as against personal property. In the days of Mr. Pell and Sir Massey Lopes excuses were constantly given for delay. Parliament was always told that nothing could be done to relieve the burdens of local taxation until there had been reform in local government, and it was not until, on the Motion of Lord St. Aldwyn, the Government was defeated in 1885 because they would not listen to what was said by Mr. Pell and Sir Massey Lopes, that we were able to get some relief.

There is one remedy, perhaps, which is in the hands of the owners of property. A little more might, I think, be done to secure that the man who ought to pay the rates should actually pay them. An enormous number of ratepayers in this country have not the slightest notion what rates they pay, because they are always paid by their landlords. I venture to think we each of us individually may do something in the direction of bringing home to our tenants what it is we have to pay on their account in respect of rates. I ask the Government to lay on the Table, if they will, some Papers on this subject, and the Papers I should like to see would be something in the nature of a continuation of those Memoranda which from time to time have been laid before Parliament by Presidents of the Local Government Board. I have been furnished with a most useful and interesting Memorandum written for the Central Land Association, of which I have the honour to be president, by the clerk to the county council of Gloucester, and I think something of the same kind, but on a larger scale, might be laid before Parliament and the public. I mean something in the nature of the Memoranda which were prepared by Mr. Goschen in 1871, by Lord Wolverhampton in 1893, and by Sir Edward Hamilton when he gave evidence before the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Balfour of Burleigh—showing how the rates have increased, and what the increase is due to. We should then be able to bring home to the taxpayer of the country the fact that he does not bear his fair share of those local burdens from which he reaps undoubted advantages.

I have endeavoured to show that the rates have increased and are increasing, and I hope I have satisfied your Lordships that they ought to be diminished. They have increased more particularly for purposes that may be described as national, and there are dangers of bad administration. The present state of affairs is entirely due to the action of Parliament. I think it is as true to-day as in 1871 when Mr. Goschen said—

> "Piecemeal legislation as regards local government has produced the chaos at present existing."

The remedy seems to me to be the taking over of many of these national services by the State and refunding the cost of others to the ratepayers. I have not given any indication of how it may be possible to raise the money necessary for the Imperial Exchequer to do this. That is no business of mine. It is the business of His Majesty's Government. But if I am to be asked the question, I can say that to me there seems to be only one answer to the question. You must in some way or other broaden the basis of taxation, and if you want to do that you should call into counsel some Member of the other House of Parliament who shares the political views entertained by noble Lords on this (the Opposition) side of the House.

Moved, "That there be laid before the House Papers respecting the additional duties imposed by Parliament during recent years upon local authorities and to the increased burdens thereby thrown upon urban and rural rates and upon the members and officials of county and other councils."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

*LORD ALLENDALE: My Lords, I am very glad that the noble Earl, Lord Onslow, has somewhat amplified his Motion, because as it appeared on the Paper it certainly seemed to me rather vague, and it was not very easy to make out exactly what his object was. I have been handicapped, therefore, in preparing an adequate reply. The main theme of the noble Earl has been to complain of the burdens that have been imposed from time to time on the local authorities. No doubt that has been done, but the noble Earl and noble Lords opposite should not forget that the late Government must take their full share of responsibility for it.

The House will not forget that it was the Party opposite who passed the Act of 1888 establishing county councils (for which the late Lord Ritchie incurred a good deal of abuse in some quarters) and ever since there has been a tendency, which I have always deprecated, to say when there was anything to be done, here is a nice little job for the county council. In this way the duties of county councils and other minor local authorities have been greatly increased of late years. But, as I have said, both parties are equally responsible. The Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 have imposed very considerable additional duties on local authorities. In 1902 the Midwives Act was passed, in 1903 the Motor Car Act, and in 1905 the Unemployed Workmen Act, all of which added to the duties of local authorities. Moreover, it must be admitted, I think, that these bodies have not shown themselves unwilling to undertake the duties that have been imposed on them; in fact, they often apply to Parliament for additional powers. There is a Bill now before Parliament, the Moveable Dwellings Bill, which will increase the duties of local authorities, and Amendments have been put down to the Housing Bill in another place which will have the same effect if carried.

It is also within your Lordships' knowledge that the councils of boroughs are frequently promoting Bills which, if passed, would add to their powers. The noble Earl has complained of the increased burdens thrown on the members and officials of county councils. It seems to me inevitable that the increased duties imposed on the local authorities should cause an increase in the work, but after all this is a small part of the cost, and the remedy is in the hands of the local authorities themselves, who can engage additional staff. The only alternative would be an increase in the number of local authorities, and this would certainly be opposed to the trend of more recent legislation, which has been in the direction of substituting large areas for smaller ones and concentrating local government in fewer hands, and I question whether that course would tend to economy in administration. But the real point is the increased burden thrown upon the rates, and, as I anticipated, the noble Earl's panacea for this is an additional subvention from the Imperial Exchequer. That, however, in spite of what the noble Earl has said, can only be considered in connection with a scheme for the revision of local taxation, and it is a question for the other House of Parliament. It will be in the recollection of the House that the Prime Minister, when he received a deputation a few months ago from the Central Chamber of Agriculture on the relation of the Imperial Exchequer to local rates, said he regarded the consideration of the question of valuation as a necessary preliminary to any readjustment of the relations between Imperial and local taxation. His Majesty's Government have promised to introduce a Valuation Bill.

Lord BELPER: When?

*Lord ALLENDALE: I have reason to believe that a measure of this kind is in an advanced state of preparation. The noble Earl also moved for Papers. I understood him to say that he would like a Return similar to that which was moved for by Lord Wolverhampton in 1893 and to the Memorandum prepared by Sir Edward Hamilton in 1899. The books containing those Reports are very voluminous, and it would involve a great deal of labour to bring them up to date and re-issue them. The main lines, however, adopted by Lord Wolverhampton have since been followed in the Summary of the Local Taxation Returns, which is annually presented to Parliament. Returns for the year 1904–5, to which allusion was made by the noble Earl, is annexed pages 5 to 8 and 50 to 55, and the series of comparative tables on pages 88 to 111, and the corresponding volume for the year 1905–6 is in course of preparation. I venture to think that the noble Earl will find in those Returns nearly all the information he requires, and if he has not got them, copies will, no doubt, be sent to him. I am informed that a great deal of labour and expense would be involved in bringing the Returns up to date exactly in the form desired by the noble Earl.

*Viscount St. ALDWYN: My Lords, I share the regret which was expressed by my noble friend the Lord Chairman that this subject has not been discussed in the other House of Parliament, where alone it could really be brought to a fruitful issue; but in default of that I think all who are interested in local taxation are very much indebted to my noble friend for bringing the subject forward and for the speech which he has made upon it. That speech appeared to me to be full of important facts and figures. My noble friend showed completely what an enormous increase there had been within the last twenty or thirty years in the amount levied by way of rates. I need not repeat the figures which he quoted. It is a common thing for people to talk of the great increase that has taken place in our taxation, and to talk, I am afraid, with very little result. The increase in the rates levied and in the amount of the loans borrowed by local authorities on the security of the rates is at least equally deserving of public attention in this country.

I do not think the noble Lord who has just sat down quite appreciated the object of my noble friend, which was not to make an attack upon His Majesty's present Government. If he made an attack at all I should say it was quite as much upon myself as upon anybody who has held an official position, because, after all, I was Chancellor of the Exchequer for a good many years during which, but for circumstances connected with South Africa which everybody will remember, it might have been my duty to attempt to deal with this great and difficult question. But my noble friend went further than any reference to any Government past or present. He really drew an indictment against the whole action of Parliament since 1888. When county councils and district councils were established, undoubtedly local authorities were created which, being based upon the most popular franchise known, were very tempting authorities for Parliament to entrust with powers connected with local government. Demands for social improvement, especially for the working classes, and other demands due to the growth in our civilisation and in our population, were put forward, together with many philanthropic ideas to give effect to which the money must be found by somebody, and the administration naturally fell upon the local authorities.

I do not think it is wonderful, either that the rates have increased, or that they have increased largely through the imposition of new duties on local authorities since the year 1888. The extent of the new duties imposed upon those bodies is very great indeed. I am told that as many as 383 Acts have been passed by Parliament since 1888 imposing new duties of one kind or another upon the London County Council alone, and I daresay the same might be true in varying degrees of other local authorities. In regard to Imperial expenditure, the taxpayer has a defender more or less in the Chancellor of the Exchequer who does his level best to keep down the imposition of new charges on the Exchequer; but the ratepayer has no defender at all. The great bulk of the constituents of Members of Parliament nowadays are not directly ratepayers, owing to the mischievous system of compounding for rates, which in my opinion is one of the worst things that has been adopted in local government in this country. The compound householders never really know what the rates are in amount or whether they are increasing or not, with the result that they feel no interest in the question.

I am not disposed to stand in a white sheet on this question, for I remember in 1869 fighting almost alone in the House of Commons against the Act introduced by the late Lord Goschen to restore the system of composition which had been abolished by the Reform Acts of preceding years. I am afraid the case now is that the great majority of the ratepayers in this country have not the active personal interest which they ought to have in the growth of the rates. Their representatives in the House of Commons are liable to be attracted by new ideas on education, and other matters, which in themselves may seem excellent and admirable, but which are perhaps, only the first step in a process which adds very considerably to local expenditure.

I will take one little instance. Your Lordships will remember what was done, I think with practically the unanimous consent of Parliament, in the Education Act of last year. By that Act medical inspection of children in elementary schools was established. That in itself will involve some addition to the rates not unworthy of consideration. But what is the use of inspecting children in order to see if they are defective or diseased, if in some way or another proper steps are not taken to remedy the defects which are discovered? In that way the door is opened for further expenditure to an almost unlimited extent. Those little things pass through without, as I have said, any real opposition from the representatives of the ratepayers in the House of Commons because the majority of the ratepayers are not directly affected by any increase in the rates. Sometimes the ratepayers do resent these changes, and occasionally their representatives do their best to resist them by inaction, which to my mind is not always wrong.

What happens then? A new policy in this matter was initiated by the Small Holdings Act of last year; for, where the ratepayers through their representatives decline to put in force the provisions of that Act, the Board of Agriculture can put the Act into operation over the heads of the local authorities, and charge the cost to the rates of the locality. I ventured to say last year, and I repeat it now, that that was almost an unconstitutional departure from the old doctrine that taxation ought only to be levied by the representatives of the people who paid it. A further example is to be found in the Housing Bill which is now before the other House. That Bill is to be put in force, whether the local authorities like it or not, by a Government Department at the cost of the local ratepayers. There, again, you see the drift of these things. There is no power of resistance, and the Government of the day brings forward and passes, with the assent of a great majority in the House of Commons, measures which impose new charges upon the rates without the assent of the representatives of the ratepayers.

Now why is this so unjust? My noble friend who introduced this subject dwelt on a matter which I do not think was alluded to in the speech of the noble Lord who replied, but which really is at the bottom of this whole subject—the injustice of the present basis of local taxation. My noble friend referred to the doctrine as old as the time of Queen Elizabeth, that persons who were assessed to local taxation should be assessed according to their ability to pay. We know very well that in the days of Queen Elizabeth there was no personal property of the kind which exists now. We know that there is no such test of ability now in our present system of local taxation. On the contrary, those who are least able often have to pay the most; and, therefore, when Parliament year after year goes on imposing fresh burdens upon a basis which is notoriously and admittedly unjust, it is not surprising that the ratepayers who really understand the subject object to it as unfair.

I was rather surprised to hear the noble Lord who has just sat down meet the Motion of my noble friend by nothing better than the promise of a Valuation Bill. A Valuation Bill, after all, will only apply to property which is rateable at present. It will not touch the grievance of the almost entire freedom of property which is not at present rated. The fact was mentioned in the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, presided over so ably by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, that the amount of the revenue of local authorities (exclusive of that relating to elementary education) levied on rateable property was thirteen times as much as that levied on non-rateable property, although personal property was worth three times as much as rateable property in its assessment to Imperial taxation. Ever since 1834 Parliament has recognised this grievance, and from that date has made subsidies from the Exchequer in relief of local taxation. The most logical, to my mind, and perhaps almost the most important, of those subsidies was that which was given by Lord Goschen when he devoted part of the proceeds of the death duties on personal property in aid of the rates, because that was bringing into contribution that class of property which obviously is unfairly exempt. Further subsidies were given, but I am afraid it must be confessed that not a few of those subsidies have only led to increased expenditure and have been no real relief to the ratepayers.

To my mind, this great and most difficult question can never be completely solved in that way. To completely solve it you ought to levy local taxation on the same basis as Imperial taxation. If you could, by any conceivable change, provide funds for local expenditure in the same way as funds are provided for Imperial expenditure, that would be in theory, the right solution. Parliament, through the House of Commons, continually changes the system of Imperial taxation so that it is always in accordance with the wishes of the people. Our system of local taxation has never been altered at all, although the circumstances in regard to it have been almost entirely changed. But I am not suggesting to His Majesty's Government that they could make such a change, because I know very well, having examined the matter myself that it would be absolutely impracticable. You could not combine control of local expenditure through local authorities with our system of Imperial taxation.

But can you do anything else? I am hopeful of the action of His Majesty's present Government in this matter. For what have they done in the present session? They have thought it right to introduce a system of old-age pensions, and everybody knows that before very long these pensions must relieve the poor rate, certainly in the country districts, of a very considerable part of the out-relief which is at present paid by it. It will be a transfer of the charge from the rates to the Exchequer and a transfer of the administration of the charge, because these pensions are to be administered, not by the representatives of the ratepayers, but by the officers of the central Government. A similar thing—similar, I mean, in principle—was done in 1877, when the Government of which I was a member took over the prisons in Great Britain and Ireland, relieving the ratepayers of their cost and the magistrates, who were then the representatives of the ratepayers, of their management, and transferring the cost to the Exchequer and the management to Commissioners employed by the central Government. That was a change which was in every way beneficial to all concerned. It enabled unnecessary prisons to be closed. It enabled classification of prisoners which had previously not been possible. It enabled the administration to be improved to a great degree and the ratepayers were relieved without any additional burden being imposed.

I hope, having regard to what they have proposed this year in the matter of old-age pensions, that His Majesty's Government may be willing to consider whether they cannot carry this principle somewhat further. As the prisons were taken over with success, why cannot the Government in the same way take over lunatic asylums and appoint Commissioners to manage them? Why could not the same system be extended, of course by degrees, to sick asylums, idiot asylums, and even to infirmaries for old and deserving poor, workhouses properly so called, and schools where Poor Law children are educated? I suggest that the principle should be accepted by applying it, in the first instance, to lunatic asylums, and it might subsequently be carried further and even be applied ultimately to the police and, perhaps, also to schools for secondary education. The Exchequer might recoup itself to some extent by withdrawing some of the subsidies which are now given to local ratepayers and which, as I have said, on the whole, have been productive of increased expenditure rather than of any real relief. This may be, and no doubt is, a large proposal, but I venture to suggest that it is the only safe way in which this subject can practically be dealt with.

You cannot hand over large funds levied by Imperial taxation to local management. That is impossible. You cannot, I think, go on indefinitely piling new duties upon local bodies. My noble friend who introduced this subject impressed strongly upon your Lordships the dangers of any process of that kind. At present the work done—done, I am sure, ungrudgingly and admirably as far as their time and abilities go—by members of local authorities in this country is beyond all praise. But every year Parliament has added to that work, and the time, I believe, is coming when men of position and ability, who mostly have private businesses or professions to attend to, will find it impossible to combine these public duties with their private work, not from any idleness or indifference, but simply from incapacity to find the time. The result of that must inevitably be either that the performance of this work will fall into the hands of a great official bureaucracy, or that certain circumstances which have recently caused pain to all friends of local government, in some of the poorer and most populous parts of this Metropolis and its neighbourhood, will be repeated all over the country.

The subject is one of great interest, of great difficulty, and of enormous importance; but, until proposals are made for finding a really fair basis for local taxation, taxing personal property as well as real property, or for finding local authorities which shall be intelligent, honest, and able to do as many duties as can be put upon them—proposals which, I believe, will never be made—I suggest that His Majesty's Government should carry still further the principle on which the prisons were taken over by the State, because in that case, at any rate, the change was not only a relief to the ratepayers, but a great administrative success.

*THE UNDER - SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord FITZMAURICE): My Lords, I am perfectly certain that I express the feelings of all those who sit on this side of the House when I say that we always listen with the most profound respect to everything which falls from the noble Viscount (Lord St. Aldwyn) on the subject of local government. He is known to us all as having had an unrivalled experience in that he has had a long and intimate acquaintance both with taxation viewed from the Imperial standpoint and also with local and county administration.

The position of the Government to-night is rather a difficult one, because, for reasons which are well-known to your Lordships, we stand practically in the same position that we did last year. We regret it, but it is not in our power to add in any material way to what was said last year on behalf of the Government, when, if I remember rightly, I had the honour of stating certain conclusions to your Lordships. But I can assure the noble Viscount and those who sit on the opposite side of the House that we feel quite as strongly as he and his supporters do how very grave and urgent this question is. At the same time, I do not think that he is altogether entitled to complain of the Government stating that the question of valuation and assessment lies at the root of the matter, or, in any case, that it is a necessary preliminary to deal with it, because, after all, that was the view of the late Government itself.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: I did not mean at all to imply that. All I said was that it did not touch the real injustice of the matter.

*LORD FITZMAURICE: I quite accept the noble Viscount's explanation. I was only going to remind him that the late Government brought forward a Valuation Bill, and they brought it forward, as I understood at the time, because the Royal Commission presided over by Lord Balfour of Burleigh had practically pointed out that valuation did lie at the root of the question. That, I think, is tolerably obvious. You cannot really tell what the true relations of rateable and taxable property are until the question of valuation has been gone into. I believe, from what I have seen of local and county administration, that the inequalities and the injustices, in some quarters the absence of a sense of public duty in local assessment committees, which would come to light whenever a Valuation Bill was carried out, would astonish the people of this country. It is perfectly true that the assessment of property for rates, owing to the pressure of expenditure, has of late years improved; but it is a notorious fact that there is the greatest inequality between districts and districts, and in some districts of the same county the assessment committees do their work in an altogether inferior manner compared with other districts.

The powers of the county council as the supervising authority are so small that in reality it cannot be said that the county council in the present state of the law has any power at all adequately to control the conduct of the minor assessment authorities of the county. As your Lordships are aware, the County Valuation Act is an ancient one. It was passed in 1852, and it has been the most difficult thing in the world to piece that Act into the machinery which was created by the Local Government Act of 1888, because the Act of 1852 presupposed the existence of the ancient county authority and only entrusted that authority with an exceedingly limited amount of power. At present there are really two separate systems of assessment—the assessment for the county rate in the hands of the county council, and the assessment for the poor rate in the hands of the assessment committees and boards of guardians practically independent of the county council, and often influenced by what may be called private prejudice and partial affection. In addition to these, you have, in regard to real property, the valuation for Schedule A. So that practically in regard to the same class of property you have three separate systems of assessment.

I would remind your Lordships that Mr. Asquith stated in another place—and I believe he has the support of the Royal Commission—that it was absolutely necessary that the system of valution and assessment should be settled before anything else could be done. But Mr. Asquith also pointed out that in his opinion the system of contribution by the State to the purposes of local taxation needed to be placed on a new basis, and, though he did not go into as great detail as the noble Viscount who has just addressed your Lordships, he clearly pointed out that, in his opinion, the future basis of contribution must be to ascertain what were national and what were local services. There, I think, my right hon. friend is standing upon common ground with the noble Viscount who has just spoken. At the same time I heard with some apprehension a note of what I may call centralisation about the speech of the noble Viscount which I think will rather alarm some of his own friends. I believe that, however jealous the local and county ratepayer may be of the growth of expenditure, he views also with great apprehension the growth of the system of centralisation which will take away from him that control over local and county affairs which most Englishmen consider to be almost a birthright.

I am quite aware of the enormous temptation which is held out by the promise of economy through centralisation. I hope, however, that some *via media* may be found in this matter, by which we shall not altogether depart from that system, which we owe very largely to Governments not consisting of members of the Party with which I have been connected all my life, under which the local authority and the central Government are brought into connection, the local authority being entrusted to administer certain funds under a strict system of control. As far as I am concerned, I do not consider that the system of central control can possibly be too stern or too severe. I do not in the least want local county authorities to be allowed to throw about the money of the taxpayers, and I believe that the local and county authorities, even if occasionally there are complaints, are on the whole grateful for the advice and assistance which they receive from the inspectors of the Home Office and the Local Government Board with whom they are brought into contact. By means of the joint action of the local authorities and the officers of the great Departments in London I think that the whole standard of local and county administration has been greatly raised and improved.

What, after all, is at the root of all these questions? What is it which causes these debates? I believe that noble Lords are thinking of three things—(1) the enormous expense and the great increase in the upkeep of the main roads; (2) the enormous increase in the cost of education; and (3) the great increase in the cost of the police. The feeling of the local ratepayer is that in regard to these matters an increasing share of the growing expenditure is thrown upon his shoulders, contrary to the original intention of Parliament. I shall not attempt to to travel over the elaborate arguments, admirably illustrated by figures, to which the noble Earl who introduced this matter alluded; but I think any one who has read the report of the clerk to the Gloucestershire County Council, to which the noble Earl referred, will see that when you come to analyse the matter it is the increase in the cost of main roads, of education, and of police that are the real—may I say?—the fighting factors in this matter.

I have in my hand some interesting figures in regard to main roads. They relate especially to the home counties, because, although the increase has been very great throughout England, the cost in the southern counties has proportionately been greater than anywhere else, those countries being especially favoured, if I may use the expression, by the motor-car community. The annual upkeep of the main roads in Berkshire compared with only six years ago has increased 63 per cent.; in Buckinghamshire, 27 per cent.; in East Sussex, 49 per cent.; in Essex, 22 per cent.; in Hampshire, 60 per cent.; in Hertfordshire, 35 per cent.; and in Surrey, 77 per cent. These figures were given by the Chairman of the Buckingham County Council in a letter defending his council against the charge of extravagance, and they were, I understand, taken from the last audited accounts of the Local Government Board These accounts are always two years in arrear, and noble Lords may be perfectly assured that if the figures could be given for, say, 1906–1907 there would be shown a very much greater increase.

I next take the question of education. The increase there has fallen very severely during the past few years on the local authorities. The reason for that is that county councils under the Act of 1902, have gradually come into line and have placed the teachers, from the head teacher down to the humblest assistant, on an adequate scale of salaries; and the payments under that scale have not yet reached what I call may summit level—that is to say, the number of persons entering the profession and going up in the scale has not yet even begun to be diminished to any large extent by people receiving the higher scale going out at the top. It is calculated that next year will see the summit level, but meanwhile the ratepayer, though receiving increased grants, to a certain extent feels that the rates of his county are going up steadily, and he probably is not aware that at the end of another two years at most the growing process under this head will have stopped. Thirdly, I take the case of the police, which, perhaps, has not attracted much attention. The cost of the police has tended to increase enormously in every county in England, owing to the increased scale on which wages are paid, the more severe requirements of the Home Office in regard to accommodation, and also the amount required from local funds for the Police Pension Fund. One of the things which has galled the ratepayer most is that the deficit on the Police Pension Fund which he has to supply has gone on steadily rising. Owing to the contribution from the Exchequer being a fixed sum the balance has to be found out of the rates, and that sum has gone on increasing.

How are you going to remedy these things? The noble Viscount quoted what was done in the case of the prisons in 1877. I was in the House of Commons in that year. The Party to which I belong was then in Opposition, and a great number of my own political friends, although there was no party vote against the Government's proposal, opposed it because they objected to centralisation; but I myself thought that those advantages which the noble Viscount has so admirably explained altogether preponderated, and I went into the lobby with the Government. I only mention that in order to show your Lordships that I approach this question from an impartial point of view. I cannot, however, agree, without further inquiry, to the suggestion that we should hand over the control of lunatic asylums from the county councils to a Government Department. As a member of an asylums committee for many years, I think local administration is of inestimable value to the unhappy inmates. And will anyone say that the Prisons Committee of Justices now can be compared in efficiency for one moment with the Prisons Committee as it existed before 1877? Without saying that the proposal is to be rejected, I cannot, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, give any pledge to-night in regard to so enormous a change as handing over the asylums bag and baggage to a central authority in London. There is not the smallest prospect of any diminution in the case of asylum buildings, as there was in the case of the prisons. Our asylums, unfortunately, are all brimming over, and whoever is in command the prospect before them is that they will have to build. I cannot see, therefore, where the likelihood of economy in this direction comes in. At the same time I need not say that in expressing these opinions I regard the views of the noble Viscount with the greatest respect.

I have tried to place before your Lordships what in my opinion are the three main points. Of course there are others. One difficulty of the situation arises from the complication of the whole system of local finance, and the impossibility of anybody but experts understanding it. The mysteries of the Local Taxation Account, the Exchequer Contribution Account, the transfers to the General County Account, and all the special accounts which have arisen owing to particular boroughs being punched out of the county area, constitute a system which may be necessary, but it can only be described by the ordinary man as a system of 'abracadabra.' The Government fully appreciate the importance and also the difficulty of the situation, but although it may not be a policy which can bring any popularity for the moment, they will feel it their duty, for the reasons I have tried to state to your Lordships, to place the question of valuation and assessment in the front, and will, when the time comes, ask your Lordships to give them the benefit of your assistance and advice in settling it.

*LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH: My Lords, I feel considerable responsibility in attempting to intervene in this debate, especially after what I shall venture to characterise as the really interesting and weighty speech to which we have just listened. But I think your Lordships will probably feel that, after the references which have been made to the Royal Commission over which I presided and to myself personally, I can hardly avoid saying a few words with regard to some of the aspects of the case which has been presented to the House to-night.

I desire, in the first place, to say how heartily I associate myself with the representation on the subject of compounding made by the noble Viscount. I believe that the system of compounding, convenient as it is to local authorities and on that ground supported very largely by them, has had the most disastrous effects upon economical administration, and I think that one of the most important reforms which could be introduced into the whole system of local taxation would be by some means or other to secure that the compounding ratepayer shall know how much he is paying for rent and how much for rates. At the present time, when the joint payment which the occupier has to make is rising, he thinks it is owing to the rapacity of the landlord, whereas in nine cases out of ten it is owing to the increased burden which has come upon the locality.

I agree with the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that before any real readjustment can take place, there must be a reform in the system of valuation, at any rate in England. Our system in Scotland has been tolerably well brought up-to-date, but the system in England is, at this moment, in a state of absolute chaos. There is a county basis, a parish basis, and very often also an additional basis for Imperial taxes. That ought to be remedied, and I hope His Majesty's Government will take it in good part if I venture to make a very earnest appeal to them to make their Bill a Valuation Bill, and not complicate it by the introduction of proposals to tax upon capital value and matters of that kind. I shall not go at length into that to-night, but I make that earnest appeal because I think that if we can keep that matter separate from party issues it will be of great benefit to all concerned.

I would venture also to suggest that something should be done to expedite the Returns which are issued by the Local Government Board. The latest complete Return is three and-a-half years old, or nearly so, and considering the enormous increases which are taking place in the amount of the rates it is really desirable that the publication of these local taxation Returns should be expedited as far as possible. I want to be perfectly just, and to say that I fully recognise the difficulty which Lord Fitzmaurice indicated. The number of local authorities with which the Local Government Board have to deal is 26,000, and it is obviously not very easy to get so large a number of Returns completed at all punctually; but an enormous proportion of them are very small in both expenditure and receipts, and if the Local Government Board would deal with the larger authorities—county councils, borough councils, and urban district councils—I believe they would find that there are not more than 4,000 of them, and that they are in the habit of keeping their accounts pretty well up to date. Their audit is not very long delayed, and if a preliminary statement were published of the larger authorities before the audit was actually completed it would enormously facilitate the discussion of these matters and enable comparisons to be made before the figures were so entirely out of date.

The noble Lord touched on another point on which I think reform is necessary. I refer to the extreme complication of the local taxation returns themselves. I venture to say that very few people, even in the office of the Local Government Board, really understand these returns. They are in seven parts. They occupy some 1,250 pages, and there is not a page in which the statements there contained are not qualified by twenty-four or twenty-five notes. In these circumstances a real understanding of them for purposes of comparison is practically impossible. In these matters of giving assistance from the central authority to the local authorities, could we not make the separation much more distinct than we have ever done before between the services which I shall venture to characterise as onerous and those which are beneficial? No one proposes to give assistance from a central authority to a locality in its cleansing, its lighting, its water, gas, electricity, and expenses of that kind. Those charges, although they are collected in the name of rates, are really not rates, but payments for services rendered, and it is perfectly idle and futile to compare the gross amount of rates in urban areas with rates in rural areas, because you are not comparing like with like. Nine times out of ten the rates which are levied on the rural authority are almost entirely of the character known as burdensome; in other words, there is no direct return given for the taxation which is levied. It is all made up of what the noble Lord mentioned as the principal burdensome items—Poor Law, education, main roads which are in excess of the local needs, and so on.

I think it would be of enormous importance if we could get a Return showing, for these onerous services in each administrative area, the gross expenditure and the net expenditure falling on rates and taxes—with a clear separation between what is paid by the central authority and the local bodies; and I suggest that you should accompany that with a calculation of what is in each case the total population and the valuation per head of the district. This is of real importance. You talk glibly of the ability of this taxpayer or that taxpayer, but you are far too apt to neglect the comparative ability of the various districts. There are rich districts and poor districts, and the burden on the latter just now is often far in excess of what it ought to be. I know the unwisdom of contributing without making responsibility go along with contribution, but the point I want to get at is this, that it is necessary to know much more of the facts as to different districts, whether rich or poor, and you ought to have a return showing the Exchequer contributions received by each county and borough per head and the valuation per head of each of those districts. I venture to say that at present the system is most unsatisfactory. You have a contribution in the form of certain taxes imposed and collected by the Imperial authority. Some advocate the separation of the system, and the assigning of certain revenues, the idea underlying it being to separate Imperial and local finance. It was said that there would then be less need from time to time for reconsideration, because the produce of these assigned revenues would grow. At one time it was suggested that the power of collecting these revenues might be transferred. I believe there is a proposal to that effect in the Finance Bill before the other House of Parliament. Whether we shall be able to discuss that Bill or, if we do discuss it, to amend it, raises a number of serious considerations; but I venture to say that the mere assigning of these revenues causes an actual increase in the injustice as against the poorer localities.

I will give an illustration of what I mean. The county of Cornwall has a valuation of only £3 14s. per head, and the establishment licences produce 1s. 5d. per head; whilst Surrey has a valuation of £8 13s., more than twice as large as in Cornwall, and the licences produce 2s. per head. If you are going simply to transfer the yield of the licences in Cornwall to the Cornwall local authority and that of the Surrey licences to the Surrey local authority, you will accentuate the present injustice and increase the burden of the poorer county. Oldham has a valuation of £3 12s. per head, and the licences produce 5d. per head; Bournemouth has a valuation of £9 13s. per head, and the licences produce 1s. 7d. per head. I suggest that before going far in the direction of the transfer to the districts of these establishment licences a careful comparison should be made of what the effect will be upon the different districts. I venture seriously to suggest that Parliament ought to have a full explanation of what it is doing before it goes far in that direction.

At the present time we have not attained any simplification of our finance. There is no real separation between Imperial and local finance, and I suggest that, apart from the injustice as between one local authority and another, the allocation of assigned revenue is not compatible with the needs of the services as a whole, it is not compatible with the requirements or the burdens of the different localities, and it does not put any premium upon economical management. The noble Viscount on the Front Opposition Bench and the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs both touched at some length upon this point. The noble Viscount urged —and I agree—that you cannot apply Imperial funds to services which are administered locally. You could not have a more direct and improper incentive to absolute extravagance. What the noble Viscount said on that head is absolutely correct. He advocated the transfer of the lunatic asylums and some other services, and with a good deal of what he said on those points I venture respectfully to agree.

The noble Lord who spoke afterwards laid great stress upon the inadvisability of undue centralisation, and he said the local ratepayer would not like to see these services taken away and administered by a central authority. I believe there would be a certain amount of criticism, but if you relieve the local ratepayer of the burden I think he will be inclined to thank you and not to press this view about centralisation too far. The objection which I have to that proposal proceeds rather on another ground. I do not believe that the central authority, without help from the best local opinion, would reach the degree of efficiency that is reached at the present time. Therefore the problem to be solved is, how assistance can be given from Imperial funds without putting a premium on local extravagance. The suggestion I would make—your Lordships will find it set forth on pages 72, 73, and 74 of the Final Report of the Royal Commission—is that instead of these assigned revenues you should make up your minds to give from time to time a definite sum, which should be paid direct from Imperial sources, to the local taxation account.

I agree with those who say that Imperial taxation is raised much more in accordance with the real ability of the payer to pay than are the local rates. I could develop that, but I think it has been common ground to-night. The proposal to give what I venture to call block grants to localities would also do away with many, or all, of the objections to the assignment of certain revenues. It would enable the central authority to put a premium on economy and to increase efficiency, because power could be taken only to pay where the policy was in accordance with public advantage and necessities. This plan would also obviate the cardinal error of separating primary responsibility for the work from liability to find the funds. You would also indirectly secure much greater equity as between the payers of the burden in the different localities.

No one of your Lordships who has not inquired into the matter can know how very unequal the burden, say, of the poor rate is at the present time. There are rich districts and there are poor districts, and, however economical the poor districts may be, and however much they may starve the service, they cannot get down the demand upon their purses to anything like the extent the richer parishes can do. For instance, in Fylde union, in Lancashire, the poor rate is 2d. in the £; in the Lampeter union, in Wales, it is over 2s. in the £. Some years ago I examined into the administration of the poor law in these places, and, speaking generally, there is no fault to be found with it. Yet, owing to the difference in the valuation per head and to quite accidental local circumstances, there is this great divergence of burden.

I will assume a simple case of two equally economical unions, each spending 5s. per head of the population on poor relief. If the amount of the rateable value per head of the population is £14 in the one case and £3 in the other—these cases actually occur in practice —and suppose each union to spend the same sum per head of population, the poorer union would require a rate of 1s. 8d. in the £, while the richer union would only have to levy a rate of 4½d. in the £. I venture to say that there is no justification for inequalities of that kind, and to remedy them ought to be one of the main objects of any scheme for the distribution of grants. I have ventured to show in the Report of the Commission how that can be done. I do not desire to go into it at length at this hour, and I do not know that I could put it before your Lordships nearly as clearly as it is in print in that Report; but I beg those who are responsible for any attempt to equalise the burden in this matter to pay attention to that aspect of the case.

At the present time some grants are distributed in direct proportion to the valuation, which is not at all a fair course, as it means that the wealthy districts, those with a high valuation per inhabitant, receive more assistance than they should, whereas the poorer districts do not receive adequate assistance. This is no new idea. It was put forward in the other House of Parliament by so good an authority as the late Sir C. Dyke Acland, who said that if you increase a grant in proportion to the population of a district you should decrease it in proportion to the rateable value of the district. I venture to say that so long as the poorer districts are treated as they are at the present time you will never get them levelled up to the proper standard of efficiency in the performance of this national service. In some scheme of that kind you will find a wiser and a safer solution than in the transfer of services as a whole, or in the leaving of things as they are. I think, however, that much might be done in transferring the burden of such matters as lunatic asylums and main roads. But if you will undertake, in a fair spirit, some such scheme as I have indicated, I believe you will get rid of complaints and preserve the great benefit of local administration supervised and controlled by the wiser main policy of the central authority.

*THE MARQUESS OF HUNTLY: My Lords, in the weighty speeches to which you have listened your Lordships have heard a great deal on the subject of local taxation and how the inequalities at present existing can be remedied. I am afraid, speaking on behalf of county councils, that we shall have to wait a long time before any of these schemes are brought to fruition. Meanwhile burdens are being thrown every year upon the ratepayers, contrary to expectation, and in spite of direct promises from Parliament. Since the Local Government Act I believe some sixty Acts have been passed affecting the powers and duties of county councils. Every one of these Acts has placed increased burdens upon the county councils, some of them of a very onerous character.

Within the last two years two other Acts have been passed, to which I would like to call particular attention. One is the Act throwing upon county councils the duty of carrying out the medical inspection of school children—a duty which will probably increase as time goes on. When this Bill was passing through Parliament a distinct pledge was given in the House of Commons that an extra grant would be forthcoming towards the increased expenditure for this purpose. I believe every county has now got the Act in operation, but we have not heard a single word as to an additional grant for its administration, which will cost all over the country an extra rate of ½d. or 1d. in the £. What the ratepayers feel is that while we are all talking on this subject their burdens are being continually increased.

Again, in the case of the Agricultural Holdings Act the Minister for Agriculture took credit to himself that £100,000 has been put aside in order to pay for the cost of bringing the Act into operation. The First Commissioner of Works stated in the House of Commons that the £100,000 would be devoted principally towards defraying expenses preliminary to the acquisition of land; and only last month Sir Edward Strachey stated that the money was voted for certain exceptional purposes and propaganda work, and that when it was exhausted it would be the duty of the Board of Agriculture to apply to the Treasury for more money. What has been the result? Applications that have been made for grants in aid of propaganda work and bringing the Act into operation, have been refused. The county with which I am connected applied for the repayment of £400 which they had expended in bringing the Act into operation; but, in their reply, the Board of Agriculture stated that they had no power to repay these expenses, as they had been incurred in ascertaining requirements and not in connection with the purchase of land. Yet it was distinctly stated that grants out of the fund were to be given towards the cost of bringing the Act into operation. These two Acts alone will raise the county rate in most cases by nearly 2d. in the £. I hope that as this debate goes on we shall have an assurance from His Majesty's Government that no further Acts shall be passed, while this question is under discussion, placing still further burdens on the ratepayers.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, on behalf of my noble friend Lord Wolverhampton, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Denman.*)

On Question, debate adjourned till to-morrow.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 24th June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Draycott Gas Bill (by Order).—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Liverpool Corporation (General Powers) Bill (by Order).—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Barry Railway Bill [Lords] (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

Lanarkshire Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Lanarkshire (Middle Ward District) Water Order Confirmation Bill.—Considered; to be read the third time upon Friday.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law with respect to the holding of Land by Companies incorporated in British Possessions." [Companies Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour." [Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [Lords.]

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and ordered, under Section 9 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 279.]

PETITIONS.

DAYLIGHT SAVING BILL.

Petition from Glasgow, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from King's Lynn, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Banbury; Beckenham; Bristol; Chatteris; Darlington; Derby; Dwyran; Huddersfield; Llandyfrydog; Llanerchymead; Mapplewell; Norwich; Redditch; Reigate; Rhosgoch; Sheepridge; Silkstone; Staincross; Sunderland (two); and Wood Green; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL AND TRAVERS' FOUNDATION.

Copy presented, of Statement of the estimated Income and Expenditure of Greenwich Hospital and of Travers' Foundation for the year 1908–9 [by Act]: to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 197.]

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copy presented, of Colonial Report, No. 561 (Ceylon, Annual Report for 1907) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (CONTAGIOUS DISEASES).

Address for "Return in respect of each cantonment or other place where soldiers are stationed in India, showing:—(1) Whether there is a hospital to which women suffering from venereal disease are admitted, and whether such hospital has been maintained continuously during recent years; (2) in the event of there being no hospital, whether women suspected of or found to be suffering from venereal disease are, or have been during recent years, turned out of the cantonment; (3) whether, at any time during recent years, women have been periodically examined by the Army medical officers, or by native hospital assistants, or by any other persons, acting under official sanction; if not, in what way is it ascertained that they are suffering from venereal disease; (4) whether such examinations are, or have been, in effect made compulsory by the threat of expulsion from the cantonment if the women do not voluntarily attend for the purpose when required to do so; (5) how many women have been turned out of the cantonment under the powers of expulsion possessed by the cantonment authorities; and how many of such expulsions have been in connection with venereal disease, and how many for other diseases; (6) whether any kind of passes or tickets are, or have been, granted to women: (*a*) Permitting them to reside in the cantonment, or (*b*) recording their attendance at medical examinations."—(*Mr. Stuart.*)

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Cecilia Shirley, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the London Female and Preventive Reformatory Institution Branch Home, 35, Eden Grove, Holloway, N. [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAYS ABANDONMENT.

Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Trade respecting the Macclesfield and District Tramways Bill, and the objects thereof [pursuant to Standing Order 158*b*]; referred to the Committee on the Bill.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Copy presented, of Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland prohibiting Motor Car traffic on a highway in County Dublin [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4032 to 4042 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Report by the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, that they are of opinion that the Greenock Corporation Order ought to be dealt with by Private Bill and not by Provisional Order, and that Clauses 52 and 54 of the Perth Corporation Order ought not to be dealt with by Provisional Order [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 196.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Friendly Societies and Insurable Interests.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will cause to be circulated with the Votes the cautionary letter promised to be issued by the Registrar of Friendly Societies to friendly societies, and the similar letter promised to be issued by the Board of Trade to insurance companies; and whether he will say if the latter has been sent to all insurance companies.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*)—
Supplementary Answer to Question No. 4 of 11th June.

(1) Copy of circular letter sent to all life insurance companies by the Board

of Trade re insurable interest under policies of insurance. (2) Copy of circular letter sent by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies to all collecting societies upon the same subject.—

Board of Trade
(Finance and General Department,
7, Whitehall Gardens, London, S.W.)
20th June, 1908.

Sir,—I am directed by the Board of Trade to inform you that their notice has been drawn to cases in which it has appeared from proceedings in the Courts of law that insurance companies have issued policies in which the insurers had no insurable interest in the life of the assured, and it has been suggested that the practice of issuing policies in which no such interest exists is not infrequent. I am accordingly desired by the Board of Trade to draw the attention of your company to the matter, and to impress upon them the necessity of satisfying themselves, before accepting a proposal for insurance, that the insurer has an insurable interest in the life proposed to be insured in accordance with the provisions of the law. I am further to request that the officers and agents of the company may be specially instructed accordingly.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

(*Signed*) T. W. P. BLOMEFIELD.

Registry of Friendly Societies,
Central Office,
28, Abingdon Street, S.W., London.
5th June, 1908.

Sir,—It has been brought to my notice from a case recently decided in the County Court that some of the collecting friendly societies have been issuing policies in which the insurer had no insurable interest in the life of the insured, and in these circumstances it is my duty to inform you that you must forthwith give clear and definite instructions to your collectors and agents not to issue policies to persons who have no insurable interest. No legal contract is created by such policies. The only policies a collecting friendly society can issue are those which come within Section 8 of the Friendly Societies Act.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

(*Signed*) J. D. STUART SIM,
Chief Registrar.

Sale of Estates in County Cork.

MR. WILLIAM O'BRIEN (Cork): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the area of land in the County and Parliamentary Borough of Cork in respect of which agreements for sale and purchase under the Purchase Act of 1903 have been signed; how many holdings are included in the agreements; what is the gross amount of purchase money agreed upon; what is the average number of years purchase, and what is the average reduction in the annuity agreed to in respect of first-term rents, second-term rents, and non-judicial rents, respectively; what was the amount of annual rent payable up to the date of the agreements; what is the amount of the annuities now payable; in how many cases have vesting orders been actually made; and what is the area of tenanted land remaining in respect of which no agreements have yet been come to.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that up to 31st March last agreements were lodged under the Irish Land Act, 1903, for the purchase by tenants direct of 13,327 holdings on estates in the County Cork. The purchase money applied for in these agreements amounts to £6,158,540, being 21·3 years purchase of the rental (£288,713), and the annuity at 3¼ per cent. on the purchase money applied for would be £200,152, equivalent to a reduction of 30·7 per cent. in the rent. As regards the area and the number of years purchase and percentage of reduction asked for in respect of first-term, second-term, and non-judicial holdings, the particulars can only be given in respect of the 5,387 agreements examined and classified to date, which relate to an area of 252,586 acres. These particulars are given in the following table—

Classification of cases.	Number of holdings.	Rental.			Purchase money applied for.			Percentage of reduction of rent in the annuity.	Number of years purchase of rent.
					Price.	Amount of advances applied for.	Amount of cash payments.		
		£	s.	d.	£	£	£		
Judicial Rents:									
(a) Fixed or agreed to since the 14th August, 1896:									
(1) Within zone - - - - - -	1,026	24,991	15	4	577,965	577,965	—	24·9	23·1
(2) Not within zone:									
(i) Where percentage of reduction exceeds maximum zone limit of 30 per cent. -	189	4,625	13	9	95,575	95,575	—	32·7	20·7
(ii) Where percentage of reduction is less than minimum zone limit of 10 per cent. -	—	—			—	—	—	—	—
(b) Fixed or agreed to before the 14th August, 1896:									
(1) Within zone - - - - - -	1,891	48,615	1	11	1,024,808	1,024,808	—	31·7	21·0
(2) Not within zone:									
(i) Where percentage of reduction exceeds maximum zone limit of 40 per cent. -	76	1,397	8	2	23,705	23,705	—	44·7	17·0
(ii) Where percentage of reduction is less than minimum zone limit of 20 per cent. -	4	126	17	0	3,207	3,207	—	17·7	25·3
Non-judicial rents - - - - - -	2,136	39,958	10	9	830,985	830,985	—	32·4	20·8
Cases in which part of the purchase money is proposed to be paid in cash - - - - - -	65	835	11	4	17,311	14,404	2,907	44·1	20·8
Total for tenanted land - - -	5,387	120,550	18	3	2,573,556	2,570,649	2,907	30·7	21·3

Of the foregoing holdings 3,289 have been vested in the tenants, representing a purchase money of £1,660,300. The Commissioners are unable to state the area of tenanted land in the County Cork in respect of which no agreements have yet been come to, but they are preparing the Return referred to in my Answer to the hon. Member's Question of 6th May.

Scottish Town Councillors and Interest in Contracts.

MR. TORRANCE (Glasgow, Central): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that Section 13 of the Town Councils (Scotland) Act, 1900, which disqualifies as a town councillor a member of a town council having an interest in any contract with such town council, is being so strictly interpreted as to preclude town councillors from purchasing coke from gas works belonging to the town council, even where the price of such coke is fixed and uniform; and whether he will take steps to have this disqualification made non-applicable to the purchase by town councillors from town councils of all such products as are disposed of to the public at fixed and uniform prices.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) Where, in the language of the Question, the products "are disposed of to the public at fixed and uniform prices," I am advised that it does not appear that the disqualification of the Town Councils Act, 1900, Section 13, subsection 5 would apply if a town councillor obtained no preference as such, but merely as a member of the public was a purchaser on the general conditions. A different question would arise if any preference occurred or any arrangement leading to the fixing of a price suitable for particular classes of purchasers within which town councillors were known to be included. Such questions would depend upon the individual circumstances; but, on the general point as put, I am advised that the disqualification would not attach.

Purchase of Untenanted Land at Rathkenny.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have purchased untenanted land situate at Rathkenny, County Meath, from the trustees of the Hussey estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Proceedings for the sale of 216 acres of land on the Hussey estate at Rathkenny have been instituted before the Estates Commissioners and an inspection has been ordered, but until the inspector's report has been received and considered the Commissioners cannot say whether they will purchase the land.

Dublin Metropolitan Police Inquiry.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, any special instructions have been given either in writing or verbally to the officers or other members of the force in regard to their duties; and whether the present display of activity on their part is due to this fact.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I am informed by the Dublin Metropolitan police authorities that the Answer is in the negative.

Dublin Metropolitan Police Annual Reports.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in publishing the Annual Report and Statistical Tables prepared by the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police; and whether he is aware that a promise was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover, in his capacity as Chief Secretary, that these Reports would be published early in the year in the same way as similar Reports are published in England and Scotland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Report, with Statistical Tables, of the Dublin Metropolitan Police for the year 1907 was submitted to the Lord-Lieutenant on 13th May, 1908, and presented to Parliament on 18th May. There was no unnecessary delay in the matter; the Report was in fact presented this year at an earlier date than for many years past.

Enclosure of Redenham Common, Hants.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he has any information concerning the enclosure of Redenham Common, near Andover, seeing that it has been common land for many years; and, if not, whether he will cause inquiry to be made.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Perhaps the hon. and gallant Member will refer to my reply on the 17th instant to a similar Question by my hon. friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent. We are still without any information on the subject, but we will make inquiries of the parish council.

Testing of Railway Weighing Machines.

MR. R. PEARCE (Staffordshire, Leek): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether weighing machines in use by railway companies are subject to stamping and periodical testing by inspectors of weights and measures throughout the country under the regulations framed in pursuance of the Weights and Measures Acts; and, if so, whether, in the interests of the public, the Department is causing such steps to be taken as will ensure that inspectors are carrying out their duties in this connection.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Weighing machines used by railway companies for the purposes of trade are subject to stamping and testing under the Weights and Measures Regulations. The Board of Trade have no reason to doubt that such machines are properly inspected.

Accidents caused by Tramcars.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state how many persons have been run over by tramcars during the last 12 months or for any shorter period.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The following statement shows the number of accidents which were reported to the Board of Trade as having occurred through persons being knocked down or run over by tramcars in the year ended the 30th April last:—

Number of Accidents.	Number of Persons		
	Killed.	Injured.	Uninjured.
1,329	105	1,003	221

Civil Servants and Political Clubs.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if it would be considered a breach of the regulations prohibiting Civil servants from being members of political associations for a Civil servant to be a member of a Liberal or Tory club purely for social and literary purposes if he abstains from active participation in political affairs.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I do not like to give a general Answer to a hypothetical Question of this kind. If the hon. Member will give me particulars of the case which he has in his mind, I will consider the question.

Pay of Officers of the Public Works and Forest Departments in India.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the pay of officers in the Imperial branches of the Public Works Department and Forest Department has been recently assimilated, whereas in the provincial branches of the same service the pay of officers of the Forest Department is still considerably inferior to that of officers of the Public Works Department; whether it is intended to assimilate the pay in the provincial branches of these two services, as has been done in the Imperial branches; and, if not, what is the cause of the differing treatment between the Imperial and provincial branches of the same services.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) It is not the case that the pay of all officers in the Imperial branches of the Public Works Department and the Forest Department has been made the same. The identity extends only to those classes of officers in the two Departments for whom a time scale of pay in place of a grade scale has recently been sanctioned, and does not imply that the two Departments will be placed on an equality throughout. The Secretary of State understands that the Government of India are contemplating a revision of the salaries of the provincial branch of the Forest Service, but he is not aware whether it is proposed to introduce a time scale of pay in place of the present grade scale.

Memorial by Mr. C. W. Allan, Conservator of Forests.

SIR SEYMOUR KING: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he has yet received the memorials addressed to him through the Government of India by Mr. C. W. Allan, an extra deputy Conservator of Forests in the Burma provincial service, so far back as the month of October last year; and, if not, whether he will have inquiry made as to the cause of the delay in sending it forward.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Secretary of State has not yet received the memorial. He has already drawn the attention of the Government of India to the matter with a view to expediting the submission of the papers.

Evicted Tenants—Case of James Murphy, of Croughteeri.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether an inspector of the Estates Commissioners has inquired into the case of James Murphy, of Croughteeri, near Feenagh, in the county of Limerick, who was evicted from his small holding by Deane Skelton, of Rossmore; and, if so, will he say what decision has been come to in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into the application of James Murphy for reinstatement in a holding of 2¼ acres, and have decided to take no action in the case.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Michael Ambrose of Ardagh.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have ratified the agreement come to between Michael Ambrose, of Ardagh, in the county of Limerick, son of an evicted tenant, and the landlady, Mrs. Margaret Enright, with regard to the evicted farm.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received no application in this matter, but have been informed that Mrs. Enright and Michael Ambrose, the son of an evicted tenant, have come to an arrangement under which Ambrose is to purchase the farm from which his father was evicted. If a purchase agreement should be lodged with the Commissioners they will have the holding inspected and decide whether they can make the advance applied for.

Reinstatement of John O'Neill, of Rockhill.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners received an application from John O'Neill, of Rockhill, Bruree, in the county of Limerick, to be put back in the holding from which he was evicted in the year 1897 by the landlords, Messrs. Carleton and Baker, and, if so, what decision have they come to in the case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have considered John O'Neill's application for reinstatement and have decided that he is a suitable person to be provided with a holding, if the Commissioners should acquire untenanted land in the neighbourhood.

Land Act, 1903 (Sect. 2).—Application of Mrs. O'Callaghan, of Downes.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners will take into consideration the application for a parcel of untenanted land of Mrs. O'Callaghan, of the Downes, Ballingarry, in the county of Limerick, whose husband, since deceased, surrendered his farms because of a rackrent, having regard to the fact that she is now living with her two sons in a cottage with half an acre of land attached; and whether her sons will be entitled to a parcel of such land in accordance with Section 2 of the Irish Land Act, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) As I informed the hon. Member on 18th instant, the applicant surrendered her holding for a money consideration. In the circumstances the Estates Commissioners cannot undertake to make an advance under Section 2 of the Act quoted, either to her or to her sons.

Evicted Tenants—Application of James Barry, of Gerat.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have considered the application of James Barry, an evicted tenant, for reinstatement in the farm of Gerat, Fermoy, on the estate of Captain Maxwell; and what is the present position of the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have considered the application in question and have decided that they cannot take any action in the matter.

Irish Education—Interpretation of Rule 128 (d).

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland recently gave authority to three inspectors in Circuit 7, Belfast, to issue a special circular giving their interpretation of Rule 128 (*d*); and if he can say what were the circumstances which caused it to be issued in the Belfast circuit and no other.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the rules of the National Board of Education instruct teachers to enter in the ordinary roll book not only the times of their arrival, but also of their departure daily; and, if not, why are teachers in the Belfast circuit asked to do so.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education are making inquiries upon the subject of these two Questions, and I will in due course acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Application for Land of James Kavanagh, of Ballinakill.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners will take into consideration the application of James Kavanagh, of Ballinakill, Kilfinny, in the county of Limerick, for a parcel of the untenanted land there on the Dickson estate having regard to the fact that he is a small holder on a neighbouring estate, and also having regard to the fact that his mother was evicted from a holding on the estate a few years previous to 1879.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners will give due consideration to James Kavanagh's application if they should purchase the estate in question.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Sailors' Unclaimed Pay and Effects.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state the total value of unclaimed pay and effects in the hands of the Admiralty; and what steps are taken to make the existence of these assets known to the relatives of deceased sailors.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouth, N.): A comprehensive record of unclaimed pay, etc., of deceased sailors of the Royal Navy (including Royal Marines) was not kept prior to the year 1873–4. From that year, and up till 31st March, 1901, the unclaimed pay, etc., accumulated has under Act of Parliament (52 & 53 Vict. cap. 42, Section 30) been credited to the funds of Greenwich Hospital, and the money thus transferred amounted to £6,172 4s. 4d. Between 1st April, 1901, and 31st March, 1907, there was accumulated a further sum of £771, which will in due course be transferred to Greenwich Hospital funds if remaining unclaimed. In addition to these sums, there is in the hands of the Admiralty standing to the credit of deceased sailors, a total of £6,337, representing deposits in Naval Savings Banks and interest thereon. Notification is sent to the relatives of deceased sailors in all cases where the names and addresses of such relatives are ascertainable. A list of unclaimed pay, etc., is also published annually in the *London Gazette.*

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Has the right hon. Gentleman any reason for supposing that the *London Gazette* enjoys an extravagant circulation among the widows and orphans of sailors?

MR. McKENNA: It is not widely circulated, but as a matter of fact, the Admiralty have inquired into this matter, and it is found that notices are always printed in the local papers where seamen are concerned.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: The local papers do not read the *London Gazette* either. Nobody in this House reads the *London Gazette.*

Naval Pensions.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can state the number of sailors of sixty years of age and upwards who are in receipt of pensions not exceeding 10s. weekly.

MR. McKENNA: It is not possible within the period of notice to furnish accurate figures, but a test examination of sections of the Pension Money Order Schedules has been conducted, with the result that the number can be approximately stated as 3,150.

Soldiers' Pensions.

MR. H. H. MARKS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state the number of soldiers of sixty years of age and upwards who are in receipt of pensions not exceeding 10s. weekly.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond): To obtain this information it would be necessary to call for Returns from every person paying pensioners at home and abroad. In view of the time and trouble involved in the preparation of the necessary statistics I hope that the hon. Member will not press for the information.

MR. H. H. MARKS: Could not information be given on the same lines as the Admiralty have done?

MR. ACLAND: I will inquire as to that.

The New Bayonet.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when the new bayonet was first issued to troops for trial; how long it has been under consideration; when any will be issued; and when will the whole issue be completed.

MR. ACLAND: The new pattern bayonet was first issued for trial on 1st February, 1907. The question of a new bayonet was first considered by the Army Council in February, 1906; 5,000 are ready for issue and will shortly be supplied; 188,000 are in order for this year, but the completion of the whole number required will depend on the money voted in future years.

Curragh Camp.

MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the officers quarters of the Army Service Corps at the Curragh Camp have been condemned as unfit for habitation; if so, what was the date of such condemnation; whether the quarters are still occupied by officers; and, if so, on what grounds.

MR. ACLAND: These quarters have not actually been condemned as unfit for habitation; they are still occupied by officers pending the building of new officers' quarters, as there are no other quarters available at the Curragh. Designs for new quarters are now being prepared.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: When will the new quarters be ready for occupation?

MR. ACLAND: The work is being pressed forward as rapidly as possible.

Birmingham Small Arms Company Contract.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what number of rifles have been ordered from the Birmingham Small Arms Company for the year ending 31st March, 1909; and what percentage do the orders placed with this company bear to the total orders given out to private contractors.

MR. ACLAND: The number of rifles are as follows:—

New - - -	- 20,625
Charger loading -	- 33,750
Drill patterns -	- 198

This Company has 75 per cent. of the orders, as compared with the London Small Arms Company which has 25 per cent. by an arrangement made for this year between the companies subject to War Office approval.

Indian Public Works Department.

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that discontent has been caused among provincial engineers by the reorganisation scheme of the Public Works Department; and whether he will reconsider the provision which prescribes that fifteen years should be the period necessary for a provincial engineer to rise to the grade of executive engineer, whereas for an officer on the Imperial list the time is only eight years.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): The Secretary of State has received no representations indicating discontent among the provincial engineers affected by the scheme, and as at present advised he sees no grounds for reconsidering the provisions of a scheme so recently introduced after careful consideration.

Indian Punitive Police.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to give further information regarding the employment of additional or punitive police in the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

*MR. BUCHANAN: Additional police have been quartered on villages only when the enforcement of the boycott or strained relations between zamindars and tenants caused imminent danger of a breach of the peace. The persons exempted have been those who were too poor to be assessed or who were known to have had no share in the disturbances. Thus Mahomedans were exempted at Jhalakati, but not in the villages outside the town of Sherpur. The rate of assessment has been determined by the means of the persons concerned. In the particular case to which my hon. friend drew attention on 19th March, the gentleman referred to was not exempted at all, and I am informed that it is not correct to describe him as "well-known for his antagonism to the national movement." In consequence of the greatly improved conduct of the people in the thanas concerned and their peaceful behaviour during the recent bathing festivals the whole of the force of additional police posted in the Mymensingh district has been already withdrawn.

Alcoholic Imports into West Africa.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what total of alcoholic liquors was imported into the West African Colonies during the year 1906; the total declared value of these; the total revenue derived from them; and the names of the principal firms importing the same.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): The total amount imported was 4,911,097 gallons; the declared value, £474,278; and the duties paid, £945,207. I am not in a position to give the names of the principal importing firms.

Australian Public Debt.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state what percentage of the Australian public debt is represented and covered by State railways and other great revenue-producing public works.

COLONEL SEELY: About 80 per cent. of the total debts of the Australian States is represented by State railways and other revenue-producing public works.

Dinizulu.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in the event of the magistrate sending his case for trial, a special Court is to be set up for the trial of Dinizulu; and, if so, what is its nature and powers, and what are the names of its members.

COLONEL SEELY: The following telegram has been received from the Governor of Natal: "Ministers propose that special Court for trial of Dinizulu and other chiefs should be constituted on lines laid down in Section 2, Act 14, 1900, and that in other matters provisions of that Act should be followed as far as circumstances permit in legislation shortly to be introduced into Natal Parliament." Act 14 of 1900, which is printed in the Appendix to the Parliamentary Paper, Cd. 420, provided for a Special Court of three Special Commissioners, each of whom was to be a person either qualified to be appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court or a Judge of one of the Superior Courts of any of His Majesty's Colonies. One at least of the Commissioners was to be a Judge of the Supreme Court. I cannot yet say who the Special Commissioners will be. The Court was empowered to try cases of treason without a jury and without appeal, and was required to follow the procedure of the Supreme Court. The decision of a majority was to be the decision of the Court.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Is it not the fact that the Act under which it is proposed to try this chief was passed during the late Boer War when circumstances were such as to justify the belief that juries could not be collected to try cases in the ordinary way, and is it advisable that an Act passed for a special purpose in an exceptional period of difficulty should be used now when the exceptional circumstances have passed away?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member's question seems to be of an argumentative character.

Martial Law in Natal—Indemnity Bill.

MR. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Natal Legislature has met in session; has a bill of indemnity in relation to the proclamation of martial law in that Colony been introduced; and when do the Government expect to be in possession of its provisions and to be able to lay it before the House.

COLONEL SEELY: The Natal Legislature has now met and an Indemnity Bill is, I understand, to be introduced. I cannot yet say when the text of the Bill as introduced will be available, but we are telegraphing for the information.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Can the hon. Gentleman say whether this House will have full opportunity of debating the Indemnity Bill before it is confirmed?

MR. ELLIS: Has not the Prime Minister promised us that?

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, Sir, the Prime Minister has assured the House that full opportunity will be given on the Colonial Vote for this Act to be debated.

*MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): Will the terms of the Indemnity Bill before it is submitted to the Natal Parliament be known to His Majesty's Government?

COLONEL SEELY: We expect to receive the text of the Bill as introduced by mail in a fortnight, but we can arrange for any Amendments introduced and the discussion thereon to be telegraphed to us so that the placing of the Colonial Office Vote on the Paper may not be unduly delayed.

MR. MACKARNESS: Will there be an opportunity for His Majesty's Government, in case the Bill introduced is not satisfactory to them, to obtain such

Amendments as they may consider necessary?

Colonel SEELY: I cannot say without consulting my noble friend, but I will inquire.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Is it a convenient course to have a Bill before this House and before the Parliament in South Africa at one and the same time? Will that be an object-lesson in self-government?

[No Answer was returned.]

Native Labour on the Rand—Heavy Mortality.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have made, or intend to make, any representations, either to the Portuguese Government or to the Transvaal Government, as to the high rate of mortality among the natives of Portuguese East Africa in the Rand mines.

Colonel SEELY: The health of the natives is a matter which directly concerns the Transvaal Government, and His Majesty's Government feel confident that they will continue the efforts which began under Crown Colony Government and have already considerably reduced the native death-rate.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the total number of African natives who have been substituted for Chinese labourers in the Transvaal since the present Government came into office; what has been the average death-rates of the two classes of labourers; and what is the total increase in the number of deaths due to the change from Chinese to African labourers.

Colonel SEELY: I do not know exactly what the noble Lord means by "substituted," but between January, 1906, and last March the number of Chinese employed on the Rand has been reduced by 19,304 and the number of natives has increased by 52,132. There has been a considerable reduction in the death-rate since January, 1906. The noble Lord will find detailed figures in a Parliamentary paper which is just published, and to which I would refer him.

Lord R. CECIL: What is the total number of deaths due to the change from Chinese to native labour?

Colonel SEELY: It is impossible to say what is the precise cause of death in each case, and what proportion is due to the change no man can say. The total figures will be found in the Return.

Mr. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): Is the hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that the percentage of deaths among the Portuguese natives is 72 per 1,000, and that among the Chinamen it ranges from 12 to 20, and in consideration of those circumstances, does his Majesty's Government propose to take no action?

Colonel SEELY: The number of deaths among the Portuguese natives, especially those recruited north of a certain line, is causing His Majesty's Government great concern. It is a matter primarily for the Transvaal Government, but His Majesty's Government will co-operate. The number of deaths among the Chinese showed a lower rate; but I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman means by asking what action we propose to take seeing that the Transvaal Government and the Progressive party have decided definitely and absolutely, to abandon the experiment of importing Chinese.

Mr. LYTTELTON: Is the hon. and gallant Gentleman aware that the recent Labour Commission in the Transvaal reported that there was no social and economic difference at all between the employment of natives from Portuguese East Africa and the employment of Chinese; and is he now aware that there is a difference in the rate of deaths, the deaths among the natives being three times as great as those among the Chinese? Does he, therefore, still persist in saying that His Majesty's Government desires to make no representation?

COLONEL SEELY: It is impossible for His Majesty's Government to reintroduce the Chinese even if they wished to do so. It is against the wish of the Transvaal Government. With regard to the deaths, of course the circumstances are different in the two cases. Would the right hon. Gentleman propose to put the whole population in gaol whenever the death-rate in gaol is less than the death-rate among the population outside?

MR. LYTTELTON: Am I to understand that His Majesty's Government are to take no action at all, though it be the fact that the Portuguese East African indentured labourers die at the rate of 72 per 1,000, while the repatriated Chinese died at the rate of from 12 to 20?

COLONEL SEELY: His Majesty's Government propose to take every possible step to see that the Transvaal Government continue the good work of trying to reduce the death-rate. The result of their efforts hitherto has been strikingly successful. His Majesty's Government do not propose to the Transvaal Government to reintroduce Chinese labour.

LORD R. CECIL: Am I right in assuming that the substitution of native labour for Chinese labour has resulted in a very large loss of human life?

COLONEL SEELY: No, Sir. I do not think the noble Lord can assume that at all. The total death-rate has been greatly reduced.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): Is it not the fact that the Chinese death rate was abnormally low in consequence of the fact that, when the Chinese become sick and incapable of work, they are deported to their own country?

COLONEL SEELY: That is one of the many considerations which make any analogy between the two cases very misleading.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): With regard to the "substitution" is it not the fact that it takes three Kaffirs to do the work which was done by two Chinamen?

*MR. SPEAKER: Notice should be given of that Question.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked if the high death rate among the natives was not due to the dust in the mines.

*MR. SPEAKER: That hardly arises out of the Question on the Paper.

The Lunacy Act.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the murders perpetrated, as is conjectured, by escaped lunatics, who cannot under the Lunacy Act be retaken if they evade recapture for fourteen days, and in view of the condition of the law in this behalf, under which a duly certified lunatic, dangerous to the community at large, becomes a free man if he can successfully secrete himself for a fortnight, he will consider the propriety of amending the statute concerned to the end that escaped lunatics may be lawfully recaptured and detained pending re-certification.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The position is not quite that suggested by my hon. friend's Question. It is true that fourteen days is the limit of time within which a lunatic can be recaptured by the authorities or servants of the institution from which he has escaped without a fresh order and certificate, but there is already full power under the provisions of Section 13 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, to deal with a lunatic not under proper care and control, and under Sections 15 and 16 of the same Act to deal with a lunatic wandering at large. Additional powers for dealing with urgent cases are given by Sections 20 and 21 of the same Act. In the opinion of the Lunacy Commissioners, with which I agree, there is no need for any amendment of the law such as is suggested by my hon. friend.

*MR. REES: Does not my right hon. friend think something is required? I have at this moment in my hand a discharge. It is not mine, but someone else's. It is the discharge of a man who escaped on 29th May, and who obviously is a source of danger and a nuisance to the country.

[No Answer was returned.]

Open Air Meetings.

Mr. CURRAN (Durham, Jarrow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Amalgamated Society of Tailors and Tailoresses has been refused permission to hold trade union organising meetings in Broad Street, W., and Golden Square, W., and whether he can state the reasons for this refusal in view of the fact that religious and temperance meetings are permitted.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Broad Street and Golden Square, being busy thoroughfares and in the vicinity of hospitals, are unsuitable places for public meetings, and for the last five years all applications to hold meetings there have been refused. Some religious meetings have been held there without permission, but have been so sparsely attended as to cause no obstruction. The police, therefore, have not intervened.

Mr. CURRAN: But is it not the fact that while trade unions are refused permission to hold meetings at these places, temperance and religious meetings are held?

Mr. GLADSTONE: If that were so there would be something in the Question—the same sauce should be given to the goose as to the gander. But I am told it is not so.

Mr. CURRAN: We look upon it as a serious interference with liberty of speech.

Mr. GLADSTONE: As a matter of fact the meetings held by the other bodies have been so scantily attended as to cause no obstruction at all.

Lead Miners.

*Mr. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has made any inquiries into the statistics of health in lead mines as compared with coal mines; and if he will explain why such miners are excluded from an Eight Hours Bill.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The question of hours of work in metalliferous mines was referred to the Departmental Committee for inquiry if they thought it necessary, but they were unable, in the time at their disposal, to make any special investigation into this part of the subject. They reported, however, that such evidence as they had received appeared to show that a day of approximately eight hours is largely prevalent in metalliferous mines. Only 4,380 persons were engaged in lead-mining in England and Wales according to the last census.

Comparative Prices of British and German Flour.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the average cash price of a sack of wheaten flour (280 lbs.) during the years 1903–4–5 was 28s. 8d. in Germany, where the import duty is about 9s. 1d. per sack, and 25s. 2d. in England for the same amount and quality; and if the Board have any data to show upon whom the difference between the amount of the duty and the increase in price fell.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): The figures are nominally correct. They would, however, be misleading if it were ignored that the prices quoted are those of particular grades of flour in Berlin and London, respectively, and do not necessarily represent the relative prices obtained by millers for their output of flour as a whole; and that the German import duty on flour is so high in comparison with the duty on wheat that only a small quantity is imported. A truer basis of comparison is to be found in the wheat prices in the respective countries and the effect upon German prices of the import duty.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman answer the last part of my Question?

Mr. CHURCHILL said the Board of Trade had no data which would enable him to give the hon. Gentleman information of an official character on the point mentioned in the last part of the Question, and any rules for endeavouring to ascertain the incidence in whole or in part of particular duties which he could furnish would no doubt be open to objection from the hon. Member's point of view as being merely matters of opinion.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: On what data have similar deductions been made in speeches here?

Mr. CHURCHILL: If the hon. Gentleman would quote me any specific deductions made on the authority of the Board of Trade I should be happy to do my best to collect the data on which they were made.

Penmachno School Site.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in view of the finding of the inspector adverse to the site proposed for the school at Penmachno, the Board intend to refuse their sanction to the loan asked for for the building of the school; in what other cases local education authorities have begun building schools before obtaining the Board's sanction to a loan in respect thereof; and whether it is the practice of the Board to give their sanction to a loan asked for under such circumstances.

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.): My right hon. friend is in communication with the President of the Board of Education with regard to the matter referred to in the first part of the Question. Without specifying particular cases, I regret to say that in some instances local education authorities have begun building schools before obtaining the sanction of the Local Government Board to the loan proposed to be raised in respect thereof. It has not been the practice of the Board to withhold sanction to a loan solely on the ground that the buildings have been commenced before the loan was sanctioned but they have discouraged local education authorities from so doing, and when any case has come under the notice of the Board in which this course has been taken, they have warned the authority that it must not be adopted in future.

Lord R. CECIL asked if the Local Government Board had no control whatever over the expenditure, and were they compelled to give their sanction after the building had been begun?

Mr. MASTERMAN: I do not think they are compelled to do that, but I would point out that the school is being largely built from a grant over which the Local Government Board have no control.

Teachers and Vaccination.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if before issuing the new Code he would reconsider the wording of the provision relating to the vaccination of teachers, with a view to making it clearer than it is that the Board of Education really means that teachers having conscientious objections to being vaccinated should have their scruples respected by local education authorities.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury): I have no power to require local education authorities to appoint or to refrain from rejecting any particular candidate, but certain alterations have been made in the Code with a view to removing the misconception which seems to have prevailed that the Board consider that the employment of unvaccinated teachers should be avoided.

New Barnet Postal Service.

Mr. BRANCH (Middlesex, Enfield): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether steps can be taken to accelerate the delivery of letters between London and New Barnet, it being difficult to get letters, posted at Ludgate Circus before 12 mid-day, delivered at New Barnet before 8 p.m., although the official time for the delivery of such letters is 3 p.m.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: Correspondence posted at Ludgate Circus before 12 mid-day (or before 11.45 a.m.

at adjacent letter-boxes) should, in proper course, be included in the 3 p.m. delivery at New Barnet. If the hon. Member will be good enough to furnish me with the covers of any letters, which have apparently been delayed in delivery, I shall be happy to have inquiry made into the matter.

Penny Postage to the United States.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether as a token of amity and good will, he will arrange for the inauguration of penny postage to the United States upon the anniversary of American Independence, the 4th July.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The proposal is one that has been considered. But the Postmaster-General of the United States and myself came to conclusion that, for administrative and other reasons the reduction should take effect from 1st October next. The actual date of the inauguration of Anglo-American Penny Post is really of minor importance. The agreement is in itself a token of amity and goodwill.

Unpaid Money Orders.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the total number and total value of Money Orders and Postal Orders issued by Post Offices and not presented for repayment within the last ten years.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There is no official record of the total number of unpaid Money Orders and Postal Orders, The total value of void Money Orders and Postal Orders is shown each year in the Appropriation Accounts. For the last period of ten years during which Returns are available the total amount in each case is as follows: Money Orders, £33,100; Postal Orders, £150,790.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: And I presume that is all profit?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: So far as the Money Orders not paid.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Is there any reason to think there are more Money Orders unpaid than there are notes issued by bankers which are not presented for payment.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I cannot say.

Waste Paper as an Aid to Fraud.

MR. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the practice of certain traders purchasing waste paper, etc., who attach signatures cut off from letters to so-called coupons, on the return of which, with postal orders, electro-plate and other goods are supplied at exorbitant rates; and whether he will take means under existing powers to prevent this fraud upon minors and other ignorant persons, or whether he will apply to Parliament to confer such powers as will enable him to stop the distribution of such communications.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: My attention has already been drawn to the circulars and coupons to which the hon. Member refers, but I regret that I have no power to interfere with their transmission through the post. I do not think there is sufficient reason for introducing legislation with a view to preventing the distribution of the documents in question.

Underground Telegraph Wires to the North.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can now give any hope of an extension of the underground telegraph system to Dundee and the North being carried out in the near future.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I fear not, at present.

Postmen's Bank Holiday Pay.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Postmater-General in what way it is proposed to recompense those London postmen who have worked extra duty before 2 a.m. or after 10 p.m. on bank holidays.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: In cases where the postman does not come under the Bank Holiday rules he will receive payment for extra duty.

An Omission from the Hansard Index.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state why the Questions as to the ratification of the Additional Act of the Brussels Sugar Convention addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs by the hon. Member for Norwood on 30th January last, and the ruling with regard to the effect of that ratification upon the powers of this House then given by Mr. Deputy-Speaker, which appear at pages 244, 245, and 246 of Volume 183 of *Hansard*, have been omitted from the index to that volume; and whether he will take steps without delay to have that omission rectified.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I understand that these Questions have been omitted from the index to Volume 183 of *Hansard* by an oversight on the part of the contractors, for which they have expressed regret. Pages 19 and 76 of the index will be reprinted as soon as possible in a correct form, and will be distributed to all persons possessing copies of this Volume.

Irish Education Grant.

MR. J. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury when he proposes to lay upon the Table of the House the Supplementary Estimate for Primary Education which has been already so long delayed.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The Supplementary Estimate for Public Education, Ireland, will be circulated to-day. Supplementary Estimates are usually presented in July, and the present Estimate is presented earlier than usual to meet the convenience of hon. Members from Ireland.

The National Debt.

MR. BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer why in the National Debt Return, No. 146, of Session 1908, the totals of the debt are given as those existing on 1st April in each financial year instead of as heretofore on 31st March; whether the effect of this change is to substitute for the achieved results at the end of the financial year the amount of the Debt at the beginning of each year unaffected by the effect thereon of the year's finance; why, for the first time, there has been introduced into the Return the amount of debt with which the current year started, accompanied by figures of expected diminutions which at the end of the year may be found not to have been realised; and whether he will cause this Return in future to be rendered in its original form.

MR. HOBHOUSE: There has been no change in the form of the Annual Return of the National Debt. The Return issued this year (Command, No. 4104) shows the amount of debt outstanding at the close of each financial year in conformity with previous Returns. The Return No. 146 of 1908, to which the hon. Member refers, is a special Return, issued for the first time this year. It was desired in that Return to show clearly the amount of provision made by Parliament in each year for the service of the Debt in relation to the amount of Debt outstanding at the commencement of the year, and the figures were arranged in the order most convenient for this purpose.

MR. BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will state the particulars of the £40,000,000 of Debt actually extinguished during the period since the Unionist Government left office.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The sum of £40,000,000 referred to in the Question is the estimated net reduction of the aggregate liabilities of the State in the three years ending 31st March, 1909. It includes the actual reduction effected in the two years 1906–7 and 1907–8, amounting to £26,664,000, and also the estimated reduction in 1908–9, amounting in round figures to £14,000,000. It is, of course, impossible to give particulars of the Debt to be redeemed in the current year.

For the two years, 1906–7 and 1907–8, the particulars are as follows—

	£
Funded Debt	8,438,000
Terminable Annuities	4,052,000
Unfunded Debt—	
War Stock and Bonds	6,041,000
Exchequer Bonds	8,500,000
Treasury Bills	4,713,000
	31,744,000
Deduct net increase of other Capital Liabilities	5,080,000
Total net reduction	26,664,000

MR. BOWLES: The House, then, is to understand that, so far from it being true that this Government has paid off £40,000,000 of debt, that is only true to the extent of £26,000,000, and the remaining £14,000,000 is merely the amount which the Government hopes to be able to pay off during the current year?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fife, E.): It is already provided for.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The hon. Gentleman opposite is mistaken. The Government have already reduced the Debt by £31,000,000, and they have already provided for a further reduction of debt by £14,000,000. That, I think, is the true state of the case.

Bank of England—Unclaimed Stock.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that under the Acts of 56 Geo. III., cap. 60, and 33 and 34 Vict., cap. 71, the Bank of England is required to transfer to the National Debt Commissioners all stock upon which no dividend has been claimed for a period of ten years; and whether he will state when the last transfer of such stock was so made.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The provisions of the law are familiar to my right hon. friend. The last transfer was made on 7th April last.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: And how much stock was then transferred?

MR. HOBHOUSE: £25 2s. 5d.

County Council Register of Voters.

*MR. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, in view of the uncertainty that prevails as to Section 3 of the Representation of the People Act, 1884, which provides that a man inhabiting any dwelling house by virtue of any office, service, or employment, and thereby considered to be the inhabitant occupier, entitles him to be placed on the register for the county council and if this section does not give the right to vote for the county council, he will take into consideration the desirability of amending the Act so as to give this qualification.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) said it had been previously decided that Section 3 of this Act, which applied to what was known as the service franchise, did not extend to the municipal or county council franchise. The question whether it should be so extended was, of course, a question of policy for the Cabinet rather than for him to discuss, and no doubt it would be most conveniently considered when the general law of registration came before Parliament to be dealt with.

New Scottish Fishery Cruiser.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland when the new fishery cruiser is to be launched, and what are her dimensions.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I am not yet in a position to make any definite statement.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: When will the right hon. Gentleman be in a position to make the statement?

MR. SINCLAIR: Very shortly, I hope.

Kilfinane Cattle-drive Prosecution.

MR. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland can he say whether

Mrs. Bridget Murhpy, of Ardpatrick, Kilfinane, County Limerick, has been committed to prison a second time since 1st December last by Captain Fitzpatrick in connection with cattle-driving, having at each time been tried in camera in the police-station; can he say whether she is at present in prison, and, if so, where; has her husband been in prison for a similar offence; and, if so, where confined; have there been cattle-raids of late around there; and will he instruct the Estates Commissioners to approach the landlord, Colonel Lowe, of Sunville, Kilfinane, with the view of arranging between him, Mrs. Murphy, and the few other evicted tenants on the estate?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): Mrs. Bridget Murphy has been twice committed to prison for cattle-driving since December last in default of giving bail to keep the peace. The cases were heard at the police-station, but not in camera. She is at present in Cork prison. Her husband was committed to Limerick prison under similar circumstances, but was released after a fortnight upon giving bail. One cattle-drive has recently taken place in the locality. Mrs. Murphy is not an evicted tenant. The farm to which she has laid claim was surrendered by her mother twenty years ago for a money consideration. The Estates Commissioners have already approached Colonel Lowe as to the sale of his property, and he replied that he was himself negotiating with his tenants with a view to selling to them direct.

MR. LUNDON: Then what is the meaning of the term "in camera," if it is not trying the woman in the police barrack instead of at the ordinary sessions Court which was sitting at the time?

MR. CHERRY: In camera involves excluding members of the public who might wish to attend. I am informed anyone who wished could have been present at the examination.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): How many people would be allowed in a police barrack? The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows very well the public would not be allowed, and therefore the case was tried in camera.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Why was this woman tried in camera? Was she defended by a solicitor?

MR. CHERRY asked for notice. As he had said, he was informed that the hearing was not in camera.

MR. BELLOC: Can the right hon. Gentleman cite a similar case to this in England?

MR. LUNDON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that at the time of the hearing the ordinary sessions court in town was sitting and that the woman demanded to be tried there?

[No Answer was returned.]

Kilrush Land Appeals.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that appeal cases in the Kilrush division were heard by the Head Land Commission at Ennis on 22nd January; whether their decisions have yet been issued; and, if not, what is the cause of the delay in not giving them.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed by the Land Commission that the decisions in the appeal cases referred to in the Question will be announced in a few days.

Vandeleur Estate Evicted Tenant.

MR. HALPIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will make inquiries why John McNamara, who had been evicted from his farm at Colmanstown, on the Vandeleur estate, has not been reinstated; and whether the Estates Commissioners will reinstate John McNamara. as soon as possible.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners nave inquired into the application of John McNamara, and after full consideration of all the circumstances have decided to take no action in the case.

Colonel Gascoigne's Kilfinane Estate.

MR. LUNDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that Colonel Gascoigne has sold off to his tenants his estate around Kilfinane, County Limerick; can he say whether all the tenants have signed the terms of agreements; has an inspector from the Estates Commissioners been lately sent to interview the town tenants also on the question of purchase; and, if so, with what results, or is there a likelihood of an arrangement for sale and purchase between Colonel Gascoigne and his town tenants.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they have received and are considering their inspector's report in this matter, but there is no likelihood of any arrangement being made for the sale and purchase of the town tenants' holdings. All of the 194 agricultural tenants on the estate except five have signed agreements to purchase.

Judge Curran on Cattle-driving.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the statement of Judge Curran, K.C., in addressing the grand jury of County Longford on Monday last, that binding to the peace is no deterrent to cattle-driving, and that there is a section of an Act of Parliament giving power to magistrates, not only to bind to the peace but to imprison, which, if it were availed of, would put an end to cattle-driving; and whether the Government will make use of the powers entrusted to them by Parliament to put a stop to this illegal practice.

MR. CHERRY: The attention of the Government has been called to the statement of the County Court Judge, as reported in the newspapers. The Government, however, cannot agree with the statement that binding to the peace has been no deterrent to cattle-driving. Assuming that the County Court Judge referred to a section of the Criminal Law and Procedure Act, I have nothing to add to the statement repeatedly made by my right hon. friend, namely, that it is not the intention of the Government to put that Act into operation.

Longford Evicted Tenants.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, when considering applications from evicted tenants to be restored in County Longford, the Estates Commissioners considered the case of Bryan M'Camach, of Deerpark, Carrickboy, an evicted tenant on the Shaw estate at Deerpark, Kilglass Division, Ballymahon Union; did their inspector visit and report to them on this man's application; and what was their decision on the case.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have not yet considered the application in question, which was only received in July, 1907. The applications received prior to 1st May, 1907 must be disposed of before subsequent applications can be considered.

Armstrong Estate, Longford.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have as yet acquired possession of 113 acres of the lands of Bawn, County Longford, under the compulsory provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act; and, if not, will they consider the advisability of purchasing the entire Armstrong estate, with a view to the division of these lands amongst the uneconomic holdings in the district.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have instituted proceedings under the Evicted Tenants Act, 1907, for the acquisition of some 117 acres of untenanted land on the Armstrong Estate, County Longford, and an inspector has been directed to visit the lands.

MR. FARRELL suggested that the Estates Commissioners should be urged to send down an indepedent and not a local inspector.

MR. CHERRY: The hon. Member had better himself send them that suggestion. It is not a matter in which the Government can interfere.

Irish Industrial School Regulations.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the grounds upon which children named Cuffe, living at Granard, who were committed to the industrial schools at Newtownforbes, were subsequently discharged from there and are now pauper inmates of Granard Workhouse; on whose authority, or by whose direction, this was done; whether he is aware that they were committed on a warrant signed by four magistrates sitting in petty sessions; and will he now direct that they be taken out of the workhouse and re-committed to the industrial school.

Mr. CHERRY: On 3rd November, 1906, two children, named Bernard and Teresa Cuffe, were discharged from industrial schools at Drogheda and Newtownforbes, respectively, by direction of my right hon. friend's predecessor, under the powers conferred upon him by statute. Mr. Bryce was advised that the facts of the case were not sufficient to justify the detention of the children in the schools. My right hon. friend cannot reopen a case which was disposed of nearly two years ago by his predecessor.

Mr. J. P. FARRELL: Who advised Mr. Bryce in this case?

Mr. CHERRY: I believe it was legal advice that was acted upon.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): What was the object of taking these children from the industrial schools and making them paupers?

Mr. CHERRY: No object at all. But the wording of the Industrial Schools Act is very strict; it was held that these children did not come under them, and it became a duty to discharge them.

Royal University of Ireland.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Royal University of Ireland, which it is proposed to dissolve, has more than 7,000 graduates, and that its examinations are annually attended by 4,000 students of all denominations, the majority being Catholics, from all parts of Ireland; whether he has ever consulted the graduate body or convocation of the Royal University of Ireland, or asked their consent with reference to the project now before the House for the dissolution of their University; whether there is any precedent in England or Scotland for the dissolution of a University without the consent of the graduate body or convocation, and merely by the action of a Parliamentary majority; and whether he is aware that the Royal University of Ireland has an annual attendance of students in excess of the annual attendance at any University in the United Kingdom with the sole exception of the University of London.

Mr. CHERRY: My right hon. friend has no reason to doubt the substantial correctness of the statements contained in the Question. He has not consulted the graduate body or convocation of the Royal University as such, but he has been in communication with many distinguished members of both the senate and the convocation in regard to the dissolution of the University. In Great Britain, Universities have been united, but my right hon. friend does not call to mind any case in which necessity has arisen for the dissolution of any University in England or Scotland. As regards the present matter, it is of the very essence of the scheme for creating the two new Universities that the Royal University should be dissolved.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL asked if a similar course had ever been taken in regard to any English or Scottish University?

Mr. CHERRY asked for notice.

Mr. FLYNN inquired if any protest of any kind had come from any body of graduates or professors.

Mr. CHERRY: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. C. J. O'DONNELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that on 13th May the congregation of the University did meet and very strongly condemn the Bill introduced by the Government.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is private tuition to be discouraged by refusing University degrees to those under it?

*MR. SPEAKER: That hardly arises out of the Question.

Irish Education Grant.

MR. J. MURPHY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have already decided on the method by which the additional grant is to be distributed this year; and if they have taken any steps, or propose to do so, in order to ascertain the views of the teachers of Ireland as to a fair and equitable method of distribution.

MR. CHERRY: The Supplementary Estimate for £114,000 is based upon a scheme which was submitted by the Commissioners of National Education and has been approved by the Government. The Commissioners, when formulating the scheme, gave full consideration to the views set forth in resolutions which had from time to time been forwarded to them by certain bodies of the teachers.

Nymphsfield Postal Service.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that application has been made for additional postal service for the area within the Nymphsfield postal district, which for telegraphic purposes is now served from Woodchester; and whether he is prepared to comply with this application and to transfer the area for postal service to Woodchester, which is within three miles, whereas the present post town, Stonehouse, is six miles distant.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: An application on the subject was received some time ago, but it was then found impracticable to comply with it. I will inquire whether there is any alteration in the circumstances and will acquaint the hon. Member with the result.

Legislation by Reference.

LORD R. CECIL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the authoritative opinions recently expressed as to the evils of legislation by reference, he is going to propose that this House should join with the other House in appointing a Committee to consider this question.

MR. ASQUITH: If, as I understand may not improbably be the case, the other House resolves on the appointment of such a Committee, I should, in view of the great importance of the subject, propose that the inquiry should be conducted by a Joint Committee of both Houses.

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he has received a memorial from the Society of Antiquaries of London asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in England, similar to those granted for Scotland and Wales; and whether he can now give any hope of a favourable reply.

MR. ASQUITH: I have received several communications in the sense of the one referred to; and there seems to be an equally strong case for appointing Commissions in regard to England and Wales as in regard to Scotland.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Has the right hon. Gentleman received a memorial from the Society of Antiquaries?

MR. ASQUITH: I have received a good many.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: You have one from this society, I know.

PROCEDURE OF OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) asked the ruling of the Speaker upon two points of order relating to the subject for discussion that afternoon. He wished to know whether it would be possible on the Report stage of the Old-Age Pensions Bill for any Amendment to be moved, whether by a Minister of the Crown or otherwise, which would increase the charge upon the Exchequer. Secondly, whether, on Report stage or the Third Reading of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, any Motion to re-commit the Bill, in whole or in part, would be possible in view of the Procedure Resolution adopted last week.

*Mr. SPEAKER: In regard to the first Question, the Old-Age Pensions Bill will be in the same position as all other Bills, and no Amendment whereby the charge upon the taxpayers is increased will be permitted. As to the second Question, the Order of the House passed last week says: "On an allotted day no dilatory Motion on the Bill, nor Motion to re-commit the Bill . . . shall be received unless moved by a Minister of the Crown, and the question on such Motion shall be put forthwith without any debate." I think that answers the hon. Gentleman's Question.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) asked what Scottish Supply would be taken the next day, and what was the business for next week?

Mr. ASQUITH said the Scottish Votes in Supply to be taken to-morrow would be in the following order:—The Vote for the Secretary for Scotland, the Vote for the Fisheries Board, the Vote for the Local Government Board, and other Votes. The first three days in next week would be the three remaining allotted days of the Committee stage of the Old-Age Pensions Bill, and on the Thursday would be taken Irish Supply.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Sir Walter Foster; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the said Bill): Mr. Sinclair.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Mr. James Hope.

DEBATES REPORTS.

Ordered, "That Mr. Harold Cox be discharged from the Select Committee on Debates Reports."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Motion made and Question proposed, "That Mr. Theodore Taylor be added to the Committee."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny) said he wished to ask why the hon. Member for East Clare was taken off the Committee. The hon. Member not only served on the Committee in the past, but he thought he was the originator of the idea, and yet now he was removed altogether from the Committee. That was the reason why he objected, and it was not that he objected to the hon. Member for Radcliffe being added to the Committee. He would move that the hon. Member for East Clare be added to the Committee.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member cannot do that without giving notice. The hon. Member can speak against or vote against the Question that Mr. Theodore Taylor be appointed a member of the Committee, and if he were successful that would leave one vacant place, and he could give notice to fill it up.

Mr. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Then I will take a division upon it.

Mr. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he wished to make a personal explanation which might obviate the necessity for a division. He understood that the matter of the Parliamentary debates under the new arrangement was to be referred to a Committee which was still in existence, the Publications Committee, but that for the purpose of considering the Parliamentary debates certain additions would be made to that Committee. On that understanding he intimated to the representative of the Government that he would be quite willing to have his name removed, provided the name of the hon. Member who was Chairman of the Parliamentary Debates Committee was added. He said that on the understanding and in the belief that the Publications Committee was to be enlarged by the addition of hon. Members. He now found, however, that the Publications Committee remained intact as it was appointed, and that this Committee was a separate Committee entirely, to deal with the Parliamentary debates. That being so, he thought it altered the situation, and that the hon. Members who were on the Parliamentary Debates Committee, should be allowed to serve on it if the matter was not to be referred to the Publications Committee. He would not like to divide against the hon. Gentleman whose name was on the Paper, who was a most valuable member of the Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Clause 1:

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) moved an Amendment to bring under the operation of the pension scheme persons in receipt of parochial or other relief—who are disqualified by Clause 3—but providing that in these cases the pension should only be such amount as, with the amount received in relief, made up the sum of 5s. per week, or at the rate set forth in Part I. of the schedule. He said that it might be necessary to alter the last four words to "as described in the schedule," or something like that, but he did not think the words agreed to on the previous night really dealt with the principle of the Amendment down in his name. He did not think the question could be raised subsequently, because the proviso with reference to two or more people in a house seemed to render it impossible to bring in a reduction of income on another clause. He desired to move it in that position in order to bring up the question of those who were at present disqualified owing to receiving relief at a time when they had no idea that there was going to be any such scheme as that brought before the public. He thought there was a general feeling that if they were taking a new step of this nature it was extremely hard that the very large number of these old people, who, through circumstances, or misfortunes, or sickness, happened to be receiving relief during this year, should be cut off from the benefits of the new Act. If they were receiving outdoor relief of a smaller amount than 5s. they would actually be penalised for no fault of their own in consequence of the clause as it stood in the Bill at present.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich) on a point of order asked whether this question should not be discussed under Clause 3.

*THE CHAIRMAN: If we are going to alter the sum to be paid as a pension this is the point at which it must come on.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said it seemed very hard that poor people should be penalised in consequence of having had the chance of receiving relief. He did not desire to increase the charge on the local authorities, who would still be paying the same amount as they were now, as the extra amount would come out of the Imperial funds. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said he was unable to deal with this particular hard case on account of the great extra charge, which he did not see his way clear to initiate, but the Amendment would very much minimise the cost which would fall upon the Exchequer, and he was glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say on the previous night that the one class he would desire to relieve if he had more money was the very class to which he was alluding. What was the description of them in Clause 3? They were said to be—

> "Those who are in receipt of any such parochial or other relief as disqualifies"——

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member now appears to be discussing Clause 3. On this Amendment I do not think he can raise anything except the question of whether the amount to be paid from public funds is to be lessened by the amount which a recipient gets from parochial or other relief.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY said he was only bringing it forward merely as the description of this class of people in Clause 3. They were debarred from voting, and therefore it was very necessary for them to see that no injustice was done to that class.

***The CHAIRMAN**: That is precisely the point which I do not think arises on this Amendment, which only raises the point that if these people are receiving parochial relief then the amount under this Bill must be cut down, but the hon. Member is raising a much wider question.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY said he had received resolutions from the country expressing the opinion very strongly that those poor persons over seventy should receive the extra amount in some way or other, and as that was the only opportunity on which he could raise the question he now begged to move his Amendment in the hope that the Government might be able to meet this case with some consideration.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, after the word 'week,' to insert the words 'except when a person qualified to receive a pension under this Act, is in receipt of any parochial or other relief, in which case the pension shall only be such amount, as with the amount received in relief, makes up the rate described in Part 1 of the Schedule.'"

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouth, N.) said the question raised was one which could hardly be considered at this point. What it did was to say that persons in receipt of outdoor relief were to have the difference between that relief and the amount of pension made up to them. It was quite obvious that if this Amendment were accepted all the local authorities would cease at that moment to give any outdoor relief, with the result that the whole of these pensions would fall upon the State, and it would in effect be a contradiction of the disqualification under Clause 3. It was, therefore, obvious that whatever the merits of the question might be, it must be discussed fully on Clause 3, and he hoped the hon. Member would be content to allow them to proceed with another Amendment.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.) said two difficulties presented themselves. The first was that they should be assured that if these words were allowed to stand as they were on the Paper it would be possible to make the necessary alteration in subsection (a), Clause 3, to carry out the wishes of his hon. friend. The second question was a different one. When they were legislating under closure resolutions those who desired to bring certain points before the Government were compelled to take the first occasion that offered, even though it might not be so convenient, otherwise they might not get any opportunity at all to bring forward their views. The Government might be able to relieve them of the first of those difficulties, but with regard to the second difficulty he thought the First Lord of the Admiralty had failed altogether to appreciate the exact bearing of his hon. friend's Amendment. He argued that the Amendment would be a contradiction of the condition of the exclusion of certain people. He did not think that was quite so, because the result of these words would really be to differentiate between the people already in receipt of relief. There would be many people in receipt of relief when the Bill passed who would not be able to come up to the conditions of the Bill in regard to the character test, etc., but the hardship of it as it now stood was almost inconceivable. There would be a certain number of people who were in exactly the same condition as those who received a pension who might be living next door, but during the period mentioned in the Bill they might have been compelled to go on the Poor Law.

***The CHAIRMAN**: The right hon. Gentleman is clearly discussing the larger question which arises under Clause 3.

Mr. WALTER LONG said the difficulty of arguing the case upon the narrow question of the amount was obvious, and if it could be raised at a later stage he would not press the matter now.

MR. CROOKS said he thought the First Lord had hit the point exactly. The right hon. Gentlemen the Members for South Dublin and Wimbledon themselves had issued an order that wherever Poor Law relief was given it should be given adequately. Could the House, remembering that some boards of guardians had been so neglectful of the orders of the right hon. Gentlemen that they were giving the miserable sum of less than 5s. a week, subsidise those very boards who starved the poor old people? He asked the House not to give to those boards of guardians a subsidy out of the taxes.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) agreed that this was an important Amendment, and he thought the First Lord of the Admiralty had missed the real argument. He believed the Amendment was out of order to begin with. It increased the charge on the taxpayer and reduced that on the ratepayer. That very day the Speaker had given a ruling against that sort of Amendment.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) said he asked the Speaker if it would be possible for anyone to propose such an Amendment on the Report stage of the Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said he did not know whether it was in order to do a certain thing on Report which it was not in order to do in Committee. There was no question that this Amendment would increase the charge on the taxpayer.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY said that on the understanding that the question could be raised later, he would be glad to ask leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

SIR F. BANBURY moved to insert at the end of line 12, the words "or such other less sum as a local pension committee shall determine." This proposal would not increase the charge under the Bill, and at the same time it would be of some assistance to the people who were to receive the pensions. The committees to be set up would probably know more about the applicants than anyone else, and it might often happen that cases would arise in which they might consider that a sum not quite so large as that named under the Bill would be sufficient to meet the needs of the case. He was glad the Secretary of State for War was in his place because he understood him to say in the interesting speech he made on this Bill a short time ago that these pensions were practically another form of outdoor relief.

MR. HALDANE dissented.

SIR F. BANBURY said that at any rate the right hon. Gentleman gave them a long description of outdoor relief, and he thought his object was to show that this Bill had some connection with his speech. In the interests of economy alone this Amendment ought to be carried, and he felt sure the Chancellor of the Exchequer would support him if he were present. He did not think hon. Members below the gangway would object to this Amendment—[Cries of "Oh, oh!"]—which would simplify the procedure under the Bill.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, at end, to insert the words 'or such other less sum as a local pension committee shall determine.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.) said he was always glad to recognise the zeal of the hon. Baronet opposite, but the adoption of this Amendment would be absolutely fatal to the Bill. The Bill gave a statutory right, subject to the definite conditions prescribing the amount, to the enjoyment of a pension, and one of the primary objects for which the pension was proposed was to take away the discretionary and inquisitorial powers exercised by the outdoor relief committee of boards of guardians. If the

Amendment were adopted the applicant would be in the same position as regarded the receipt of a pension as a candidate for outdoor relief, and the whole object of the Bill would be destroyed.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) remarked that the Prime Minister had just stated that the principle of the Bill was to give a statutory right to a pension subject to certain definite conditions as to the prescribed amount. One of the subsections stated that the pension was not to be paid if the applicant had habitually refused to work, or had refrained from working when he was able to do so. That provision opened the door to a long inquiry into the habits of the man, and to say that a man had an absolute right by coming and saying before the Committee: "I am over seventy years of age—give me 5s. a week," was merely a travesty of the actual facts. If he understood the decision which the Government had arrived at, unquestionably it was not to make the sum a fixed amount, but one varying according to the needs of the applicant. The point raised in the Amendment seemed to be a very important one, and notwithstanding the statement of the right hon. Gentleman he did not believe it was contrary to the principle of the Bill. The Amendment seemed to him to be carrying out the real object of the Bill as it now stood, which was to give 5s. a week, or a less amount, according to the needs of the applicant, if he was able to satisfy the pension authority that he was industrially of good character. There was no reference in the Bill to his moral character. That was what it amounted to. A man would have to come before the pension committee, and satisfy them that he was industrially of good character. There were two ways of approaching the subject. They might provide that everybody over seventy was to have an indefeasible right to a pension of 5s. a week, and that was the policy of hon. Members below the gangway—or at any rate that was as far as they proposed to go at present. The second method was that it was in the interests of the State that people should not be allowed to starve or undergo intolerable hardships, and therefore, as a matter of bounty, they would assist those in that condition. The Government proposal was neither one nor the other, but it was a mixture of the two, and he could not see under those circumstances how it could be maintained that the Amendment was against the principle of the Bill. If it was really desired to help those who needed help there was only one way of doing it, and that was to put it in the hands of a local body who knew the whole circumstances of the applicant. He should certainly support the Amendment of his hon. friend.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley) said it was easy in any Bill to point out inconsistencies, but they wanted old-age pensions. It was easy for those who did not want old-age pensions to find inconsistencies. He considered this Amendment would be a cruel one in this way, that instead of giving to a man according to his needs, he would get just what somebody else thought were his needs. It was a proposal which would create jealousies and heart-burnings, and open the door to a good deal of personal animosity. He had in his mind more particularly rural districts where local committees might be somewhat biassed. He hoped the Government would not allow these old people to be placed at the tender mercies of a local body who were not in a position to understand the merits of the case.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) protested against the remark of the right hon. Gentleman that local bodies were biassed and likely to display animosity. Was that really the view they had of local bodies? If that was so, then he would remind the Committee that this Bill gave the greatest power to the local authorities, and there was no safeguard against the very things which the right hon. Gentleman feared might happen. This Bill proposed that the local authorities should be trusted in different ways. They had the fullest power to determine whether a man had habitually refused to work, and a number of matters upon which the granting or withholding of a pension would depend, and the applicant had merely the right of appeal to the Local

Government Board. If the animosity to which the right hon. Gentleman referred, really existed in the minds of the local pension committees, they would have the fullest opportunity of exercising it, and when they came to deal with a sliding scale they would have to determine what income a man had, and whether it was such as to entitle him to a pension. If these bodies were really to be moved by personal animosity——

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: I did not say they would.

MR. RAWLINSON said it was as well that it should be known that applicants for pensions under this scheme would have an exceedingly difficult time in view of the nature of the facts they would have to prove before the pensions could be granted.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) said the point which his hon. friend wished to have discussed could be better discussed on Clause 3. There was no doubt that if the conditions to be imposed under Clause 3 were to be retained, the local pension committees would have placed in their hands powers to a large extent of the kind which his right hon. friend the Member of the Bordesley Division was unwilling to trust them with. He thought there was great substance in the argument which his right hon. friend had addressed to them, and if that was so, the argument applied equally, he should say *a fortiori*, to the delicate inquiries imposed on the committees under Clause 3. In regard to the question now before the Committee, he was wholly with his right hon. friend and the Government in desiring that there should not be discretion left to the local committee to diminish the pension for any reasons except such as Parliament had specifically defined in the Bill. Whether Clause 3 was right or wrong, the conditions laid down were tests which were established by Parliament to be applied in particular cases, but that was a very different thing from giving unqualified discretion to local committees, not subject to any test laid down by Parliament, to reduce a pension if they thought fit. In the case of the great bulk of pensioners, who had probably no resources, or very slight resources, except the pension, 5s. was by common consent the smallest sum which was likely to be of any use to the recipient, and he would be very sorry to see words introduced in the Bill which would suggest to the local pension authorities that Parliament had in mind that a smaller sum should be given. He did not think that a smaller sum should be given. In many cases it might be disadvantageous to pay a less sum than five shillings. If his hon. friend went to a division on this question, he would be bound to vote against him. He recognised that his hon. friend approached this question throughout from a different standpoint from himself. His hon. friend made no secret that he disapproved of the principle of old-age pensions. He, himself, approved of old-age pensions, though he did not say that he approved of the particular scheme proposed in the Bill. Being in favour of old-age pensions, his hon. friend would not be surprised that he was unable to support him.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said he wished to point out one consideration which had been overlooked in discussing this matter. The Amendment had been objected to on the ground of giving too much discretion to the local pension committees. It had been suggested that it would be an intolerable thing that it should be in the power of a local body to determine what amount should be received by a pensioner under the Bill. Under the Bill as it stood they were giving the pension committees far greater powers than his hon. friend proposed to give them. The Government proposed to give the committees power, not to reduce or vary, but to withhold a pension altogether. One of the absurdities of the Bill was that a local committee had only to determine on the evidence that might be before them that a man had failed to work according to his ability, opportunity, and needs for the maintenance of himself and those dependent upon him. That would cut out almost every woman entirely. The discretion given to the local committees would be enormously increased by the schedule dealing with the sliding scale. The schedule was not before the House at present, and that, of course, greatly increased the difficulty of discussing the Bill. The measure had either no principle at all, or some principles which were utterly contradictory.

*Mr. G. D. FABER (York) remarked that there was a good deal to be said on both sides. Enormous powers were already given to the local pensions committees. They had to decide what would qualify for a pension and what conditions would disqualify. They must, therefore, go into a very wide field of inquiry. He himself was loth to give to the local pension committees the power to decide the amount, if any, of the old-age pension. They had quite enough to decide under Section 2 as to whether the applicant had fulfilled the conditions, and under Section 3 as to whether he was disqualified, without going into the wider question of what pension the applicant should receive. Even as it was they would almost break the back of the local authorities. A good deal of unpleasantness would be caused if the local committee were allowed to decide how much the applicant should receive. It was better that Parliament should take the power out of their reach, leaving the local committee and the applicant to enter the field within the four corners of the Bill, each knowing how much the pension would be if the applicant fulfilled the conditions and did not come within the disqualifications.

Viscount MORPETH (Birmingham, S.) said he opposed the Amendment because his hon. friend proposed to put into the hands of the local pension committees powers which no human being could exercise. He would be sorry to undertake to say what the deserts of anyone were in respect of his past life. The local committees would, no doubt, be composed of excellent men, but the mover of the Amendment asked the House to give them power to judge of the moral character and conduct of persons throughout the whole of their life. That was a power which no man could properly exercise. He did not cast any aspersions on the local authorities. When they went to work they would discharge their duties to the best of their ability, but the proposal of his hon. friend would give them an amount of patronage which would be very dangerous to local government. His hon. friend's proposal would make them the greatest dispensers of patronage in the United Kingdom. It might be said that the powers were similar to those proposed to be conferred by Clause 3. That was not the time to discuss the provisions of Clause 3, but he might say in advance that action under that clause would be very arbitrary, and it would probably be the cause of a great deal of heartburning. It might be said that at the present time the guardians had that power; but the duties of the guardians were based on an entirely different estimate of their functions. The duty of the guardians was to relieve destitution; the duty of the pension committee was to award pensions to those people who deserved them by having served the State. For his part, he thought the only safe course would be to tie up the conditions on which the pensions were to be given as strictly as possible and leave as little as possible to the initiative or judgment of the committee. Of course, the committee should have some discretion, but a discretion so wide as that proposed by his hon. friend would be disastrous to the people of this country, who would be made servile, and disastrous to local government, which would become corrupt.

*Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) said that if for no other reason than that the Amendment left it to a committee to determine the amount of a pension he would vote against it. His hon. friends opposite were agreed that all these men who were to have pensions were entitled to them as a matter of right—[An Hon. Member on the Opposition Benches: The Government say so.]—and if the pension committee had the power to determine the amount of the pension it would interfere with the working of the Bill. Of all the dangerous proposals in the Bill the most dangerous was that of a pensions committee. He believed that the principle on which the pension ought to be awarded should be as nearly as possible automatic, to prevent various influences coming in which ought not to be brought into play in connection with the award.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he really thought there was a good deal in the Amendment. A case might easily occur where the pension committee reviewing the facts might say that if they gave 5s. that would be more than the circumstances justified, and that they would give 1s. or 2s. if they had the discretion. Therefore, he thought the Amendment was a very humane one. The only reason that could be given for rejecting the Amendment was that hon. Members had in their mind that the pensions were given as a reward for services rendered to the State. But there was no test in the Bill to show that a man had performed any work or any service to the State. All that the man had to say was that he was in need, that he had not saved any money; but that was not a service. He might be a nuisance to his fellow-creatures and the only reward he ought to get was to be punished. If the Bill had been drafted so that before a man could claim a pension he had to prove that he had done some useful service to the State, the pension would be given as a matter of right; then they would have established a right. But there was no right established in the Bill. An hon. Member opposite had said that the man had no right to sue; but if the pension was a right he would have a right to sue for it. The granting of the pension was entirely in the discretion, first, of the pension committee, and secondly, of a body of officials in London. How could it be said that it was a right when one man was to get 1s., and another 2s. or 3s., and still another 5s., according to the amount of his income? Where was the right there? [An Hon. Member on the Opposition Benches: We have not seen the scheme yet.] He assumed that the scheme would be based on the lines sketched out the previous day. There was no right in the proper sense of the word; it was only a form of charity. All the circumstances should be taken into account to see what amount of charity should be given. Where a man was maintained by his children, or could be assisted by his children to the extent of 2s. or 3s. a week, it would be quite unreasonable to give him 5s. It should be remembered that this scheme would be a very heavy burden on the taxpayers. A man earning 12s. a week was to get 3s.; but there were many in the country at the present moment who were maintaining themselves and their family on only 12s. a week.

Sir F. BANBURY said he did not wish to put the Committee to the trouble of a division. [Ironical Ministerial cries of "Oh, divide."] He had no objection to dividing; but before doing so, he would like to say that he thought his right hon. friend rather misjudged his motive in moving the Amendment and the motive of the Amendment itself. His motive was humane. He thought that the local pension committee had very great power given to them under the Bill. They had to decide all manner of questions before giving the pension. They might say: "It is hardly fair to recommend this particular man for a full pension, but if we had the power to give him 1s. or 2s., we might do it because he is a more or less deserving person." The pension committee was to be appointed by the borough, district, or county councils, which were popularly-elected bodies. He was always under the impression that his right hon. friend was in favour of popularly-elected bodies. He himself never was. Now his right hon. friend said that these popularly-elected bodies were not to be trusted, and that they might be animated by personal animosity. A greater tribute against popularly-elected bodies he had never heard paid.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS said that the Committee would not expect him to reply to his hon. friend's statement as to what his views were with regard to local bodies.

Question put, and negatived.

Lord R. CECIL rose to move to insert the following proviso—

"Provided always that the sum shall be in the prescribed proportion to the contribution made by the pensioner as provided in regulations to be made by the Treasury."

MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester), on a point of order, said that if this Amendment were carried it would declare for a contributory scheme of old-age pensions. The House, on the Second Reading of the Bill, discussed an Amendment which involved a contributory scheme, and the House decided not to accept that Amendment. The Chairman of Committees in 1880 gave the following ruling—

> "When the House sent a Bill to a Committee for the express purpose of having its clauses considered, to reverse the object of the Bill and to send back to the House a measure which carried out the exactly opposite object would be irregular."

He asked the Chairman whether, in view of that ruling by one of his predecessors, the Amendment of the noble Lord was in order.

LORD R. CECIL said they had had several statements of the object of this Bill from the Treasury Bench, but he did not think that in any one of them it was said in so many words that it was to grant a pension on non-contributory conditions. What was said was that the pension was to be granted on certain conditions, which could be modified so as to affect the amount of the provision to be made. Might he point out that it was impossible for anybody to say what was the motive of the majority who voted for the Second Reading of the Bill? The Amendment raised certain questions which did include a contributory scheme. It did not condemn a non-contributory scheme, but was mainly designed to approve of a contributory scheme. Those who voted in the majority did not agree with the proposal put forward by the hon. Member for Preston. What other motive they had it was impossible to fathom. He submitted that it was impossible to say that this Amendment, any more than any other Amendment, was in favour of a contributory scheme.

MR. HAROLD COX said he might point out that what the House really decided when his Amendment was voted upon was simply "that the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*THE CHAIRMAN said he thanked the hon. Member for Leicester for letting him know in advance that he was going to raise this point, and thus enabling him to look up the precedent. The ruling of the Chairman in 1880 was upon an Amendment proposed to a very short Bill, which had the effect of contradicting what was laid down in the principal clause—practically the only important clause in the Bill. He did not think that that precedent bore upon this question at all. He thought that the point that was decided on the Second Reading was that the House would not reject the Bill as a whole on the Second Reading, because there was not in the Bill a contributory scheme. Having passed the Second Reading of the Bill, and a contributory scheme being absolutely within the scope of the Bill, he could not see that they could refuse to discuss it.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn) asked whether the Amendment would not be more properly discussed on Clause 5, which referred to the mode of paying pensions.

*THE CHAIRMAN said he thought it could not be discussed there. It would have to have been discussed on Clause 2 if it had been a general Amendment. But it brought in the question of the amount of the pension, and made a contributory scheme dependent upon that. Therefore, this was the only place in which the Amendment could be taken.

LORD R. CECIL said that, in his view, this question had not been decided by the House on the Second Reading, and it was important that the House should come to a decision whether they desired a contributory or a non-contributory scheme. The form of the Amendment in fact left the Treasury to settle by regulation the amount of the contribution to be made, and also its nature. He thought that was a very bad form of Amendment, but at the same time he had not at his command the information which the Government had probably accumulated, and if he were to attempt to lay down the specific conditions on which contributions should be made he would be immediately met by the statement that the Government had information in their possession which showed that the scheme could not succeed. He was very anxious to get a decision on the general principle of a contributory or non-contributory scheme, but he did not mean to refer more than very generally to the contributory scheme that he had in mind. He would like to see some scheme based upon the principle that, where a man was prepared to make an annual contribution, however small, to some central fund, he should have the right at his death to receive the actual amount of those contributions with, of course, interest and such additions as the State should think right to make, or, when he reached a certain age, which ought not to be higher than sixty-five, he should be entitled to receive an annual pension. It was said that the difficulty of that scheme was that, unless they had compulsion, they would not get people to go into it. He believed that that was unsound. The reason why old-age pension schemes on a voluntary basis had failed in the past was that people would not subscribe a weekly sum on the chance of living to a great age. But the hon. Member for Chippenham was aware that there were in the West of England schemes of pensions which were doing remarkably well, and he saw no reason why this should not, particularly if something were added by the State. Great care would have to be taken not to interfere with the proceedings of friendly societies, but the German scheme had shown that there was no difficulty about that, and it was possible so to base a scheme that the contribution by friendly societies would not be taken into consideration. Such a scheme had very clear advantages. He did not believe they would ever be able by any device to induce the people of this country to accept a pension of 5s. a week for nothing without their making any direct contribution towards that amount, without there being a strong prejudice against it, and the result would be that it would not be a reward for honourable work as Ministers hoped but merely a pension given very much on the same terms and conditions as the existing outdoor relief. If the old-age pension scheme was to be successful, they must devise some plan for getting rid of that difficulty, and the only plan likely to succeed at all was one on a contributory basis. The objections to this scheme had been put under four heads by the Prime Minister, but he thought those objections were based on an entire misapprehension. The right hon. Gentleman had said there would necessarily be a delay in bringing the scheme into operation, but the German scheme was brought into operation immediately. It was perfectly easy for the State, with its command of enormous capital, to bring in the Bill before and not after the contributions were raised, and to take care in the future that those who would not contribute should not receive a pension. The second objection was that it required compulsion, but he saw no reason for that, as voluntary schemes had been successful. Then the right hon. Gentleman had said that there would be an uneven discrimination between different forms of thrift, but he did not understand how, with his Bill before him, the Prime Minister could have made a criticism like that. His last objection was that it would not help the very poor or the woman who could not subscribe. But the "receipt of Poor Law relief" disqualification in the present Bill cut out a very large section of the very poor. Further, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had an Amendment down which cut out all the unemployed with regard to the industrial test. Who was to say what was the opportunity which an unemployed man had taken advantage of to refuse to work?

*Mr. LEIF JONES asked whether the noble Lord was in order in ranging over the whole Bill in arguing for his particular Amendment.

*The CHAIRMAN said he thought the noble Lord was ranging over a very wide field. He was listening to his argument to see how the noble Lord connected it with the Amendment.

Lord R. CECIL said that the Amendment raised the question of a contributory scheme, to which the Prime Minister had told them there were four objections. But he had been trying to point out that even in a non-contributory scheme such as the Prime Minister himself approved, the fourth objection would apply quite as strongly as to a contributory scheme. The proposed Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer really must cover a very large number of those who were of the poorest class, and he had instanced a case in which a skilled mechanic might refuse to do the work of a day labourer, very likely properly, either because he was not fitted for it or because it might lower him in his industrial class and make it very difficult for him to get back to his particular work. There was a very striking proviso to Clause 3 in the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—

> "Provided that a person shall not be disqualified under this paragraph if he has continuously for ten years up to attaining the age of sixty, by means of payments to friendly, provident, or other societies, or trades unions, or other approved steps, made such provision against old age, sickness, infirmity, or want or loss of employment as may be recognised as proper provision for the purpose by regulations under this Act."

What about unequal discrimination between different forms of thrift? Here they had a distinction in favour of those who contributed to friendly societies, whereas those who had invested their savings in house property did not come into the scheme. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that one great objection to a contributory scheme was that it excluded all women. Every married woman would be excluded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own Amendment, because they knew that the vast majority of married women did not work for their own maintenance. It was perfectly true that a certain number of married women went into the factories, but he believed that every social reformer, and he was certain every Labour Member, agreed that it was far better that married women should not go into the factories. It was disastrous, and he believed that wherever the practice prevailed it was a most fruitful cause of infantile mortality. Women should not be the family bread-winners. The right plan was for the men to be the bread-winners, while the women should keep the house and look after the children. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had pointed out that if they gave the advantage to those who were in friendly societies they would cut out women, because women did not enter friendly societies; yet the right hon. Gentleman, after saying that, straightway presented an Amendment which gave the advantage precisely to that class, namely, those who subscribed to friendly societies. He only wished to indicate these defects as rather characteristics of the Bill, in order to show that they could not get out of the difficulty of some kind of discrimination and some kind of regulation of those to whom they were giving a pension under a non-contributory scheme. A non-contributory and universal scheme was absolutely outside the range of practical politics. The moment they put a limit on the recipients under a non-contributory scheme they inevitably introduced precisely that discrimination and all those difficulties which the Prime Minister regarded as essentially characteristic of a contributory scheme. The real truth was that a contributory scheme was far less dependent on any of these distinctions. There was no reason why they should make any inquiry at all into a man's character. All they had to do was to satisfy themselves that he had made his contribution, and then he would be entitled to the pension which the Bill provided under the scheme. He admitted that a contributory scheme did not cover the whole ground. There seemed to be a certain class of people—he believed a much smaller class than was commonly thought, but whom they all desired to assist — who were industrious, always ready to work when they could get it, yet who, owing to misfortune or some other cause, were unable to earn sufficient money to make even the tiny contribution, which would be necessary under a contributory scheme. He thought that class must be dealt with somehow. His view was that these people must be dealt with by a rearrangement of the Poor Law. They must have a classification of the poor. He would not venture to forecast what that should be. He trusted they would be in a far better position to form an opinion on this subject in a few months time when they got the Report of the Royal Commission. He thought everybody in the House would be greatly surprised if the Poor Law Commission did not suggest, as one of its recommendations, that there should be some kind of classification of the poor whereby the industrious and deserving poor would be enabled to receive assistance without any stigma or any of the disadvantages which at present attached to outdoor relief, while the less-deserving poor would be left in something of the same position as they were in now. That, he thought, was the only way in which this subject could be completely dealt with. The present Bill lumped those two classes together, and tried to deal with them by the same scheme, while it did not lay the foundation of that which was far more important and urgent, namely, the infirmity pension. He would not say that the Government had been turning in favour of a scheme for dealing with infirmity pensions, but they certainly had not shut the door against an infirmity pension under a contributory scheme. It was far better in dealing with infirmity pensions to have a large scheme of insurance, which need not necessarily have all the defects of the German system, which would be difficult to apply in England. They could have a general contributory scheme not only for old-age but for infirmity pensions for those who were unable to earn their own living through accident or from some other cause. He ventured to ask the Committee, even at this stage of the Bill, to think carefully, in taking this enormously important step, with reference to pensions on a contributory rather than on a non-contributory basis. The Bill was of vast importance, and it seemed to them on his side that if they proceeded with it in its present form, it would be a serious national danger. The question of a contributory scheme was now for the first time definitely and decidedly raised. They had only two hours and twenty minutes in which to discuss it, while there were other important questions which should be considered before the closure was applied. He had endeavoured to compress his observations as far as he could in submitting an Amendment of this importance.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, line 12, after the words 'last inserted, to insert the words 'Provided always that the sum shall be in the prescribed proportion to the contribution made by the pensioner as provided in regulations to be made by the Treasury.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said that this question had been discussed on the Second Reading of the Bill, and the House had come to a decision with regard to it; as a matter of fact, it was one of the principal matters discussed. He agreed with the noble Lord, as the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had already said, that they were dealing with only one branch of the Poor Law, and other branches of the subject, with reference to classification and the position of the infirm, would have to be dealt with subsequently. They were not attempting in this Bill to deal with either of those questions. Therefore, in his view, it really did not affect the question which they were considering at the present moment, whether the pensions should be contributory. When one looked at the history of this matter, and the various Committees and Commissions which had inquired into it, one found that the view in favour of a contributory system had gradually become weaker, and he thought had now finally disappeared. It was rather remarkable that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who was very strongly in favour of a contributory scheme in the earlier stages, had himself come to the conclusion that as a measure of practical politics he must give up contributory pensions, and introduce them in some other form. The noble Lord had referred to the observation of the Prime Minister, made on the Second Reading of the Bill, that before a contributory scheme could come into effect forty or fifty years must elapse. The noble Lord had said that that period could be cut down in various ways, but during that process the system must be unjust as between the various pensioners under a contributory system. The real objection to the proposal was that if it was to be voluntary, and the noble Lord, he thought, rather suggested that it should be voluntary, it clearly would not meet the difficulties of the situation nor provide pensions for those who combined necessity and desert; and if it was to be compulsory he did not think, as a matter of practical business, it was a system which, however much they might desire it, could really be introduced into this country. It was alien to our spirit in regard to these matters, and it would be a matter of administrative impossibility to collect over a large number of years a certain proportion from the employer, a certain proportion from the employee, and a certain proportion from the State. Everybody had desired in these debates that the system of old-age pensions should not interfere with saving and thrift. One hon. Member on that side of the House had suggested that thrift for those who had a very small wage was not an advantage, and ought not to be encouraged, but that they ought really to spend the whole of their wage. But he thought there was a desire in all quarters of the House that, as far as possible, the system of old-age pensions should do something towards the encouragement of thrift and not be antagonistic to it. It would be very hard to lay down the best method for working men and women to save to provide for old-age. In his opinion, in many cases, he was not sure in the majority of cases, that would be the worst method in which they could save their money. They had much better save it for their children, for sickness, for out of work, for death and so on all matters which were pretty certain some time or another to come into their life, and which, therefore, it was an advantage that they should make provision for. But if they provided for old age, in the first place they might never enjoy the advantage of their saving, and he did not think in very many cases it would be in any sense of the term the best method in which they could make a saving. But if the noble Lord's proposal was introduced they were forced to save for old age, which would to that extent diminish the possibility of saving, and making provision for other difficulties and disadvantages.

LORD R. CECIL: I expressly said I did not propose compulsion.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said the noble Lord talked of a universal scheme, generally contributory, and unless he was going to make it pretty universal he thought his first argument, that it would only really deal with a comparatively small number, and not necessarily with those to whom an old-age pension would be a great advantage, was good. He did not think compulsion was the best method in which the State could engender thrift. If it was voluntary he did not think it was necessarily the best method in which the State should encourage thrift, and on whatever ground they took it, from the thrift point of view he thought it would be a disadvantage and not an advantage. But he differed from what the noble Lord had said in regard to the last point he made. The Prime Minister said if they had a contributory scheme, whether it was voluntary or compulsory it necessarily excluded the most necessitous and not necessarily the least deserving classes. The noble Lord said the Bill did that already. It was true that those in receipt of Poor Law relief were the most necessitous class, but one of the chief objects of the Bill was to prevent persons in their old age from seeking Poor Law relief at all. Then the noble Lord said the Amendment of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to the question of ability and opportunity would exclude a certain number. It would not exclude those who were poor, but it would those whose poverty was due to their misconduct. The object was not to deal with a man because he was poor, but because he had not used his opportunity to the best advantage. Then as regarded women, it appeared to him also that it was quite clear that by the noble Lord's Amendment they would be almost altogether excluded, because, in the first place, most of them would not be able voluntarily to subscribe, and he understood the noble Lord did not propose to compel them to do so. The clause was not one which would exclude women from the benefit of the pension. The wording of the first part—"failed to work according to his ability, opportunity and need, for the maintenance of himself and those legally dependent upon him"—clearly covered women who worked in factories or elsewhere, and those who had applied themselves and their work, and their means, and their opportunity to attending to and looking after their homes, as well as to the men to whom it was particularly applied. Not only did he believe that the contributory system in itself was impracticable in this country, but he believed on its merits it would have this disadvantage if introduced. Of course, it had the advantage of being a great attraction to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The cost was considerably less, he believed, and it would be worth while spending the additional money in order to obtain a complete system, and one which would deal with all these various classes on the same basis. But the non-contributory scheme would bring within the purview of the Bill those who were most necessitous, those whom they were specially desirous of assisting, and those especially who by the means of old-age pensions would be kept from joining the pauper ranks. He hoped the Committee on these grounds would reject the Amendment.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) agreed with the noble Lord that it was important that the House should come to a decision whether there should be a contributory or non-contributory scheme, and that it was eminently desirable that they should have an opportunity of discussing it as fully as might be before they were guillotined. It was a somewhat curious commentary upon the modern proceedings of the House of Commons to his regret, and he could not help believing to the regret of the majority of Members, that on one of the most important matters connected with the Bill they should be left with so short a time for its consideration. The right hon. Gentleman had referred to the views of the Member for West Birmingham with regard to contributory schemes, and it had been stated, both by him and by the Prime Minister, that while at one time he had been a warm adherent of the view that contributory schemes were desirable, he had found reason later on to change his opinions, and those statements were founded on a speech delivered some years ago. But he had carefully read the speech, and could not see that there was anything in it which wholly abandoned the possibility of a contributory scheme, and he had good reason to know that even if he had abandoned it, which he did not think he had done, he had altered his opinion later on. As he regretted extremely that the question of contributory pensions was ruled out altogether, he would begin his observations by meeting a challenge from the Secretary of State for War when he was not present, as to the view expressed in the Report of the Committee of 1899, of which he was chairman. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out that the Committee had considered and dismissed schemes of this nature, but he forgot that they had had since then, what they had not enjoyed before, viz., the experience of the German system since 1899. It was true that old-age pensions in Germany were initiated by the Act of 1889, and if it had only been the Act of 1889 the criticisms of the Prime Minister on the night that he unfolded his Budget would have been justified. But the Act of 1889 was repealed by that of 1899, and it was under the later Act that there were at this moment in Germany something like 1,000,000 or 1,100,000 people in receipt of pensions. That in itself was almost a sufficient answer to one of the main objections which were constantly made to the contributory system, that the advantages of it must be deferred for the lifetime of a generation at least. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister himself had spoken with three different voices on the question of contributory schemes. He began by ruling out contributory old-age pensions altogether, supporting that view by a reference to Germany. He had always made it one of the chief objections that it was impossible that these contributory schemes could come into operation within anything approaching a reasonable time, that the advantages to be derived from them must be postponed for many years; and that the proposal would arouse extreme hostility on the part of the friendly and benefit societies. That raised another question upon which he desired to ask for some further explanation from His Majesty's Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted before the Second

Reading of the Bill in reply to Questions he had asked a fortnight or three weeks ago—that the Government had issued a circular to some of the principal societies asking their opinion as to what the effect would be of a non-contributory old-age pension scheme upon those societies themselves. They were informed that the answers had been received, and that they were going to be issued. It was true that the right hon. Gentleman had volunteered to show them to him, but he had not seen them, and it was now nearly three weeks since the question was raised. He had been told that they were now in print, and that the House would have an opportunity of seeing them on Friday, which was just too late. He hoped, however, that they would be issued immediately, and that they would be able to form some idea from reliable sources as to the views of friendly societies upon the effect of this Bill, which many friends of his believed in its present form would be most prejudicial to the future of those societies. To go back to the Prime Minister, the right hon. Gentleman in a second speech seemed to him to take a rather different view of the effect of contributory schemes, because he said on the 17th of this month—

> "There is nothing in this Bill which, in our view, is in any way hostile to existing agencies for the promotion of thrift, nor, indeed, to the subsequent engrafting—if and when Parliament should see its way to take that step—of a State-aided contributory plan."

That gave him some encouragement and hope that the right hon. Gentleman had not so completely discarded the idea of a State-aided contributory scheme, as he had imagined from his first speech. Those hopes, however, were short-lived, because there came a third speech in which the right hon. Gentleman would have none of them and summed up the whole subject in two questions, which he put to the advocates of contributory schemes. The first was as follows. He said—

> "I ask the advocates of a contributory scheme these two questions. First of all, are they going deliberately to leave that large element in our population who, through no demerit of their own, have been unable to make even the scantiest provision for their future entirely out in the cold, or relegate them to the humiliating condition which in this country surrounds the acceptance of Poor Law relief."

Upon this question of Poor Law relief nobody had pledged himself more strongly than the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he supported a paragraph in the Report issued in 1899, which said that whatever was done with regard to old-age pensions no scheme would be complete without considerable changes in the Poor Law; and, he did not understand the meaning of the reference to those humiliating conditions in connection with poor relief. But he was sure he might say for the Unionist Party that they did not intend to do either the one or the other, and when they came into power—which might be earlier than some hon. Members were anticipating—right hon. Gentlemen opposite would then have an opportunity of seeing the proposals by which their object could be attained. The right hon. Gentleman said—

> "The second question I ask is this : are you, even as you must adopt a contributory scheme as your only plan, are you going to leave those who can to contribute twenty or thirty years, if it may be for the lifetime of a generation, before you make any real effective provision for securing them a provision in their old age? These are the practical questions which the advocates of a contributory scheme have to answer."

He denied that under a contributory scheme they must leave those who can contribute to live for the lifetime of a generation before any effective provision was secured. The right hon. Gentleman was not in the House when he quoted the case of Germany, which proved that a contributory scheme might be put into effect without waiting for anything like a lifetime. It was not for him to put before the House a contributory scheme—that was the business of the Government—but he entertained the strongest possible conviction that a contributory scheme could be devised with advantage to the poor long before the distant period which the right hon. Gentleman had so frequently laid down as inevitable. He had done his best to dispose of some of the main objections of the Prime Minister and his colleagues to a contributory scheme, but there was another statement made by him in which he said it must be compulsory. He did not know why. Why should they not make a contribution a condition of receiving a pension. If they adopted the German scheme, and had three contributors—the State, the workman, and the employer—there was no reason why the burden should not be an exceedingly small one. There were thousands of workmen in this country who would not object to a small contribution. They were always being told of the humiliation of everything connected with the Poor Law, but with regard to humiliation he had never been able to understand what was the distinction between receiving relief from Imperial and from local funds. If the scheme he suggested were adopted, that objection also would be removed at once. There was another great advantage to be gained by a contributory scheme—the innumerable difficulties of discrimination, into which the Government had been driven, would disappear at once—for discrimination would no longer be needed. If they had a contributory scheme instead of all these difficulties of discrimination, the position of applicants would be just the same as was the case with a member of a friendly society in which no inquisitorial questions were asked, and in virtue of the contribution they made they were entitled to certain payments at certain times. That would be precisely the position of a pensioner under a contributory scheme, and he for one could not sit still and remain silent in view of the statements made on the opposite side of the House, and be taken as having accepted them when all idea of a contributory scheme was ruled out by the Prime Minister and his colleagues as something which was impossible, unsatisfactory, and could not possibly succeed.

SIR F. BANBURY rose to continue the discussion.

MR. ASQUITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 323; Noes, 104. (Division List No. 135.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Ambrose, Robert
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Bethell, Sir J H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co)
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher

Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt,Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh,Charles (Donegal,E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks,G.Croydon (Launceston)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray,Capt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, C. Duncan Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John(Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason,Rt.Hn.E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas

Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh.N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Baldwin, Stanley
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Haddock, George B.
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Hunt, Rowland
Kerry, Earl of
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Stanier, Beville
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Question put accordingly, "That those words be there inserted."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 86; Noes, 346. (Division List No. 136).

AYES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Bertram, Julius
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cox, Harold
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Forster, Henry William
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Haddock, George B.
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kerry, Earl of
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Calmont, Colonel James
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Oddy, John James
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert

Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir BerkeleyGeorge D.
Smith,F. E. (Liverpool, Walton
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)
Starkey, John R.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Walker, Col.W. H.(Lancashire
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A.Stanley(York, E. R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C.B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Ambrose, Robert
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A.(Finsbury,E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beauchamp, E.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner,RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn. Sydney Charles
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Farrell, James Patrick
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gardner, Ernest
Gill, A. H.
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Griffith, Ellis J.
Gurdon,Rt Hn SirW.Brampton
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jones, Sir D.Brynmor(Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lundon, W.
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macpherson, J. T.

MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Killop, W.
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shackleton, David James
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Snowden, P.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason, Rt Hn. E. (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

MR. HAROLD COX, on a point of order, said he understood that the Committee left the Government to frame the schedule, but was it not the case that the Committee ought to have the right to consider upon what principle the schedule was to be based?

*THE CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had agreed to postpone the Part I. of the schedule. When they came to the schedule the basis could be discussed.

LORD R. CECIL asked in what part of the Bill he could find "Part I. of the Schedule to this Act?" Where could he find it?

*THE CHAIRMAN said that he admitted on the previous night that the circumstances were quite unusual. The intention of the Government had been indicated. Cases of this kind had occurred on several previous occasions. At the same time he thought that the sooner the schedule was put down on the Paper the better.

MR. RAWLINSON asked if it would be in order to move an Amendment to the schedule raising the limit to more than 13s. a week?

*THE CHAIRMAN: I called on the hon. Member for Glasgow.

*MR. BARNES (Glasgow Blackfriars) asked if hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway would permit a speech to be made from the Labour Benches. They had sat there with all the patience they could command listening to Amendments of a comparatively unimportant character—to frivolous Amendments. [Cries of "Withdraw," from HON. MEMBERS on the OPPOSITION Benches, and of "Go on" from the LABOUR and MINISTERIAL Benches.]

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member ought not to say that. I ask him to go on with his Amendment.

*MR. BARNES essayed to speak, but was again met by loud cries of "Withdraw" and counter cries of "Go on."

*THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order. I appeal to Hon. Members to allow the hon. Member for Glasgow to proceed.

LORD R. CECIL: I ask you, Sir, whether, after you have ruled that the expression used by the hon. Member for Glasgow was out of order it is not the duty of the hon. Member to withdraw it?

THE CHAIRMAN: I did not order the hon. Gentleman to withdraw. What I said was that I thought he ought not to have used the expression. Still, I think that as a matter of courtesy to myself it is better that he should withdraw it.

*MR. BARNES said that that being so, he unreservedly withdrew the expression, and was sorry for having used it. He moved to leave out the following: "Provided that where any persons are living together in the same house and any two or more of them are entitled to such a pension, the pension shall, in each case, be at the rate of 3s. 9d. a week." He was glad to find the effect of those lines was to fix the pension at 3s. 9d. a week instead of 5s., not only to married couples but to any two or more persons who lived together in the same house. He was glad to find that a very large number of Members—he thought there were twenty-two—had put the same Amendment on the Paper. That in itself ought to weigh with the Government, not only having regard to the numbers but having regard to the fact that the hon. Members who were responsible for those Amendments were drawn from all parts of the House. He was also exceedingly glad to find on the previous day that the right hon. Member for East Worcestershire expressed his opinion in advance with regard to this particular Amendment. He need not say that he did not move his Amendment on any grounds of morality. It had been said that the subsection as it stood would have a bad effect in discouraging marriage and encouraging irregular unions. He thought that that was all nonsense. As a matter of fact, seeing that the pensions were only to be given persons on reaching the age of seventy years, they need not concern themselves very much with that. The section cut at not only married couples, but at all persons who lived together in the same house, whether married or not, and whether they were women or men. Prior to the Bill being printed, when he understood from the Prime Minister's speech that the section was only to apply to married couples, he was inclined to agree with the right hon. Gentleman, but since the Bill came into their hands, and he had found that the subsection was of much wider application, he had come to think that the case against it was much stronger than before. He opposed it not only on those grounds, but because he thought it exhibited a peddling sort of economy which was altogether unworthy of a great subject. At first it occurred to him that it was reasonable to think that a married couple living together in the same house should be able to live more cheaply than two living outside, and if all the other pensioners lived separately the subsection might be defended and effect a good deal of economy. But as a matter of fact they did not live separately. The great mass of the pensioners would be living with their sons and their daughters, and therefore a single pensioner living outside would, as a matter of fact, as compared with a married couple, rather have an advantage. The old man or old woman living with a son or daughter would not take up a great deal of room, and the old body might very often do a bit of work to make up for the cost of her living in addition to the 5s. On these grounds he did not think any case had been made out for limiting the pension to 3s. 9d. each to married couples, or two pensioners living together, as compared with 5s. to a single pensioner. Moreover, they wished to encourage these old people to live together, but the effect of the subsection would be to separate them. One would go to the house of a daughter, and the other to the house of a son, in order to avoid the conditions of the Bill. The Bill would, therefore, operate against the old people being kept together; he desired that they should be kept together. He wanted the home to be kept up as a centre to which the children might go back and visit, and for that reason he was against the subsection being applied to married couples. But this section not only operated against married couples, but all old people, who for reasons of economy desired to pool their pensions and live together. He could quite conceive that six old people might pool their pensions, and live in comparative comfort on 30s. a week. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed replying to this Amendment he would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, in estimating the cost of these old-age pensions, he had estimated that he was going to save anything by this particular provision, because the provision was not in the Bill when he made his speech a few weeks ago.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Oh, yes, it was.

*MR. BARNES said the provisions as to the old married couples, it was true, was always in the Bill, but he did not think the point of the old people pooling their pensions was contemplated. The right hon. Gentleman had said a good deal about the New Zealand scheme and others, and had said that the New Zealand scheme had these provisions which they wanted to defend. But he would remind the right hon. Gentleman that the New Zealand scheme did not contain this provision. Under that scheme each one of a married couple was entitled to 10s. a week at the age of sixty-five, and if New Zealand conditions were to be any guide in this matter he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would have regard to that point. The point for the deletion of this provision had further been strengthened by the acceptance of the sliding scale which was going to complicate the matter considerably. They were not only going to apply that to the person with an income of £26 a year, but also to joint incomes of £40; not only to the pension of 5s. but to pensions of 3s. 9d., 3s., 2s., 1s. 6d. and 9d. The inevitable result of all that would be a refinement of inquiry, a very much more complicated administrative machinery and far too much inquiry into the affairs of the people who were to benefit by the Bill. Besides that it would set up, in all probability, a class of vested interests which it would be difficult to get rid of, and which they would want to get rid of before long when wiping off these qualifications. Of course, if this subsection was eliminated it would mean more money, but the acceptance of the principle of the sliding scale also meant more money. The sliding scale was going to cost—so it had been said—something like £500,000. He did not know how much this Amendment would cost if carried. There were 70,000 old couples of seventy years of age, and if they were going to give them £6 10s. more, which would be done if this Amendment were accepted, it would mean something like £400,000. He had allowed nothing for any possible savings by the reduction to 3s. 9d. of those other than married couples. But although it might mean more expense than the Amendment accepted on the previous day with regard to the sliding scale, if it was reasonable to accept that Amendment it was reasonable to accept this. Parliament had not to make provision for the whole at once, and though it might cost £500,000 they would only have to provide a quarter of that this year; but whatever they had to provide did not matter much. They would have to provide it later on. The acceptance of this Amendment and of others which the Labour Party desired to move meant more money next year if not this, but there was no difficulty about that—there was plenty of money at the same source as that from which this came. They might have a heavier income-tax. Hon. Members opposite had been twitted by a right hon. Gentleman on the front Opposition Bench with their inconsistency with regard to the income-tax, because it had been said that Mr. Gladstone was in favour of abolishing the income-tax and saving it for national emergencies; but this was one of those national emergencies for which it should be saved. After all, consistency was but a scurvy virtue, and usually resorted to to cover a devious course. But whatever might have been Mr. Gladstone's view sixty years ago it had no analogy to the present position. He submitted there was ample means upon which to draw for a far more comprehensive Bill than was now before the Committee. He would not say more, although much more could be said, because they were extremely desirous of having, if they could, a vote upon a much more important Amendment, namely, an Amendment to the age-limit. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 1, to leave out lines 13 to 16 inclusive."—(*Mr. Barnes.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'any,' in line 13, stand part of the clause."

MR. McKENNA said the hon. Member had made a very moderate and clear statement, but had not thereby made the task of answering any easier. His proposal was obviously one that called for sympathy, and was difficult to meet. If the Committee would recall for a moment the conditions under which the Bill was introduced they would, he hoped, agree that on the particular question before the Committee the Government should be supported. The hon. Member opened up the whole question when he said a little later on they would come to the far more important question of age. When the Government considered this Bill they considered most carefully the cost of the measure and the means of meeting that cost. Every one of these questions—age, reduced payments to couples living together, whether a sliding scale should exist or not, and if so, at what point it should start—all these questions were taken into consideration in regard to how far the Government could go with the means at their disposal. It was all very well to say "this concession" might be made, but each of these concessions meant money, and the Government had a right to ask the Committee to keep in their mind the question of whether the Government had done the best they could with the means at their disposal. The only question which the Committee had to consider was: Was it, in fact, cheaper for two persons to live together than to live apart? The point as to the 3s. 9d. did not arise, because his right hon. friend had an Amendment on the Paper to leave out "at the rate of 3s. 9d.," and to insert "reduced rate." The only issue, therefore, before the Committee at the moment was whether there should or should not be a reduced rate in case of aged persons living together. He conceived that it was relatively cheaper for two persons living together than for two living separately.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): The right hon. Gentleman should know by this time whether it is or not.

MR. McKENNA: In reply to the hon. Member he would say that he hoped it was cheaper. The pension of 5s. a week was the amount which everybody recognised as the very small sum which had been fixed by almost universal consent, and had almost entered into the language of the country as the minimum amount on which a pensioner could live. The question arose, could two pensioners live together and maintain their household on less than 10s. a week? The Government conceived, in introducing the Bill, that the right proportion would be 7s. 6d. The question was still open owing to the form in which it now stood.

Was it, or was it not, the fact that a reduced sum was right and appropriate for two persons living together? Under the Bill as it was originally introduced, a person might be a pensioner with an income of 10s. a week, and his wife might have 10s. a week. If each had a pension of 5s. a week, the income of the household would be 30s. a week. He submitted that that would be giving the pensioners a sum which, having regard to the claims on the public purse, ought not to be given to them. Supposing the husband had an income of 8s. a week, and he received the full pension of 5s., and the wife had an income of 8s. a week and got the full pension of 5s., the income of that householder would be 26s. a week. He thought the payment of 10s. a week in those circumstances to a married couple would be excessive. It would not be excessive in the view of hon. Gentlemen opposite. He himself would like a perfectly free hand to distribute pensions on a far larger scale, but there must be regard to the exigencies of the financial situation and to the limitations which were necessarily imposed upon the Government. Given that the amount of money at the disposal of the Government was limited, by the reduction of the amount granted to a married couple they were, in fact, providing a pension for some other person. If it was the fact, as he understood it was accepted to be the fact, that the means of the Government were limited, by increasing the expenditure in one quarter they would inevitably curtail it in another. It had been said by the hon. Member for Glasgow that under the actual conditions of to-day, two persons living together would spend quite as much as living separately, and he had instanced the case of a single pensioner. But that was not the case they had to consider. They had to provide for a minimum pension for those persons who had no other means, and they had to take their case in comparison with the case of persons living together in a combined household of two. The point had been made by the hon. Gentleman that in the speech of the Prime Minister married couples only were mentioned, but the Bill as it now stood provided for any two persons, whether married or not. The Prime Minister was naturally entitled to think that the majority would be married couples, but it was not legitimate to infer that because the right hon. Gentleman only referred to married couples, therefore it would be improper to introduce the Bill in an extended form. Then the hon. Gentleman had also taken the point, a perfectly correct and true point, that there was no reduction in New Zealand in the case of married couples or persons living together. But the whole cost in New Zealand was small, and there the comparative wealth was vastly larger than ours. ["No."] The average wealth in New Zealand was much greater than ours. In New Zealand they were dealing with the case of a small country, with a population of not over 500,000.

MR. SNOWDEN: Nine hundred thousand.

MR. McKENNA said the hon. Member ought to take into consideration that the Committee presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon had made this very recommendation of a reduction for two people living together.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): Give me the page.

MR. McKENNA said he was under the impression that the right hon. Gentleman had recommended that very proposal. But whether that was so or not, and whatever might be the plan in New Zealand, the amount of money under this scheme was to be limited to 5s. to the person over seventy, and hon. Gentlemen opposite said they ought to give 5s. to each of two persons living together. The Government said that the amount on which two people could live together being less than double the amount given to one person, therefore the Committee might be fairly asked to vote for the principle that the amount given to two persons living together should be on the reduced rate.

MR. WALTER LONG said he very much regretted that the Government had not adopted in regard to this Amendment the same course as they had adopted in regard to the Amendment dealing with the sliding scale. When there appeared on the Paper Amendments in the names of Members in all quarters of the House showing that there was a widespread feeling on the point under discussion, it was almost invariably the case that the Government waited to hear what the House, in more than one quarter, had to say, before they announced their decision. He rather regretted the answer of the First Lord of the Admiralty to this Amendment. The Government very naturally took great credit to themselves for the introduction of this Old-age Pensions Bill. He admitted to the full that they were entitled to claim credit, but that credit became discredit when they were obliged to admit that they had not considered their proposal from the point of view of the whole of their scheme. The First Lord of the Admiralty stated that the Government had considered the financial proposals, and that they could not go beyond the limit already indicated. But there was something else besides financial liability, and he ventured to say that a limitation of this kind could not be maintained twelve months after the passing of the Bill. The First Lord of the Admiralty said it must be admitted that two persons could live together for less than they could living separately. And what case had he given them? He had given them the case in which the two persons had each an income of 8s. a week, or 16s. a week between them. But the case which they on that side of the House had in mind was that in which the person had nothing beyond the 5s. pension. Was it correct to say that the difference of half a crown represented the difference between the demands on the married couple and the demands on single pensioners? What was the reduced cost to a married couple? It was simply in fuel and in rent. In the case of rent, certainly in the country districts, it did not come to half a crown per week. There was another aspect of the question as to which he profoundly regretted the decision of the Government, and he most earnestly hoped that it was not their final decision. In the country districts everybody knew that there was serious practical difficulty in connection with housing accommodation; and one of the causes was that among the owners of cottage property there was naturally a rooted unwillingness to turn old people out of their cottage and garden, where they lived in the hope that they might make something to add to the probable allowance that would be made to them by their friends. If they had two people with 5s. a week the probability was that they would join in a common cottage, and there would be an inducement to them which there was not under the existing law of the land, to come together and make a common establishment. But the proposal in the Bill made anything of the kind absolutely impossible. If the result of that combination of household expenditure was to fine these two people 2s. 6d. a week, did anyone imagine that any of them would consent to do it, or that they would get over the practical difficulty in regard to housing? The right hon. Gentleman told them the only issue was whether there should be a reduced rate or not. They were put in a greater difficulty by the adoption of that argument. Everybody admitted the inconvenience of the arrangement by which the Government did not produce their schedule on which everything depended, but it was increased tenfold when they were told they were not to debate the practical and direct issues raised by the Amendment, but something of which they could have no knowledge until the schedule was produced. But he denied that that was the issue. The issue was a very simple one. It was whether, when people were living together either as married couples or by arrangement, they were to be fined at the rate of 2s. 6d. a week. Nobody could deny the right of Parliament, if it saw fit, to impose certain tests upon people before they received pensions. But had Parliament a right to say to these people in one breath: "We give you a pension, not as outdoor relief, but as a right for the part you have played in the State," and in the next: "Although it costs two people 10s. to live in one cottage, you, a married couple, who have done your best, who have reared a large family and sent them out into the world to help towards the nation's wealth and greatness—because you are a married couple living together, and because we think you can do with less money than your neighbours, we are going to fine you half-a-crown." Parliament was asked in this proposal to do that which it ought not to do, and it was asking the people who had to carry this law out to do something which they could not do. He believed they would find the difficulties in regard to the limitations impossible, but this difficulty they would find insuperable. He was convinced that people would not sit down under an injustice of that sort. What was to be the result? Supposing they found the dissatisfaction so great and the injustice so manifest that there was a general impression throughout the country that this restriction could not be maintained, what would happen? They would have then to find the money which they said they were unable to find now. He had had a calculation given him which showed that the probable increased cost would be only between £200,000 and £300,000. The plea came from so many quarters of the House that it was almost unanimous. Did anybody doubt what the decision would be if the House were left a free and unfettered exercise of their right? Let the Government take counsel before they adhered to what he hoped might have been a somewhat hastily-expressed opinion on the part of the First Lord of the Admiralty. It was not too late to retrace their steps. Let them not spoil their whole scheme by imposing on the most deserving, and in some cases the most suffering, of the community a disability which was harsh and unjust, which could not be justified by any argument that could be used by the Bench opposite, and which would leave people with a sense of rankling injustice which would do much to diminish if not destroy what good they were proposing to do.

Lord R. CECIL rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent and declined then to put that Question.

*MR. DICKINSON (St. Pancras, N.) added his voice to the appeal to the Government to allow members to vote according to their opinions. He did not wish to argue on the broad merits of the case because the last words of the right hon. Gentleman expressed them admirably. The proposal undoubtedly was harsh and unjust, and had very little to recommend it in principle. If they passed a proposal such as this a great deal of the good which would be done in establishing old-age pensions would be entirely destroyed by reason of the fact that at the very commencement of next year, when the pension committees were considering how to put the Act into operation they would be met with a great number of cases of legal difficulty and of great hardship, and they would hear nothing but complaints of a proposal which had taken away from a certain number of people a right which they would never understand the reason of depriving them of. They were dealing with a considerable class. He held there must be considerably over 100,000 married couples, both over the age of seventy, and he held that the number living together as brothers and sisters or friends or lodgers or tenants was far greater, and these would arouse great legal difficulty. The utmost difficulty would arise even on the construction of such a simple word as "house," which had been construed by Courts of law in all kinds of ways. For some purposes a lodger's room was a house. For others it was not. Sometimes a tenement dwelling would be one house and sometimes thirty or forty, and the difficulty of settling whether persons were living in such a house together and were entitled to 5s. or the reduced sum would undoubtedly be very great. In almshouses persons would undoubtedly be living together. Would they be entitled to separate pensions? An old woman would often take another old woman to lodge with her. Were they living together or not? In addition to the legal difficulties there were very great financial difficulties. The clauses with reference to couples living together would work out in the most extraordinary fashion. Not only was there this clause which limited the amount of pension, but there were also two or three clauses which dealt with the amount of means of the persons living together which entitled them to one scale or the other, and he held that there were hundreds of thousands of cases in which the joint operation of these clauses would bring about the most extraordinary results. If a man of seventy living alone had 10s. a week he would be entitled to a pension of 5s. If he married a wife of fifty as his means would be over £20 a year he would get no pension at all. Then take the case of two persons living together, both over seventy. If A.'s means were £26 and B.'s £20, and they lived alone, they were entitled to 5s. each, but if they lived together, A. having over £20 would get no pension, and as A. and B. would be having a joint income of £46, half of which was more than £20, B. also would get no pension. Similar objections applied in the same way to the sliding scale put forward in the schedule if, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, the scale which was going to be adopted was one similar to that proposed by the hon. Member for Worcester. A very great deal of dissatisfaction would arise in the administration of this Act, and quite apart from the question of the injustice of this proposal, and the hardship it would entail upon many worthy old couples, he submitted that next year when the Act was put into operation they would have nothing but complaints, which would entirely overshadow the general satisfaction that should be caused by the institution of a system of old-age pensions.

Mr. MILDMAY (Devonshire, Totnes) said that he could not but think that the Government would have done well to accept this Amendment in view of the little favour with which the provision was regarded in the House of Commons, and in view of the destructive criticism to which it had been subjected throughout the country. The Bill as printed somewhat differed from the adumbration of the scheme by the Prime Minister in the Budget statement, but he maintained that the provision as printed was equally indefensible. It had been crudely drafted, the wording left much to be desired, and as the last speaker had said, the expression "same house" was hardly adequate. But, apart from that, he put it to the Government that no provision had excited so much hostile comment amongst the very poor throughout the length and breadth of the country as this penalisation of old couples. Surely the State ought not to offer to those who should live together this strong inducement to separate. The State ought rather to encourage them to cling to each other and to give to each other mutual help to the end of their days. Not only were married couples concerned; they all knew cases of two of a family, perhaps a brother and sister, past work, who had settled to come together in their old age, and live together, to join their slender resources and to help each other to the end. Were they to discourage that kind of thing? He believed that it was a fallacy to assert that the cost to two old people of housekeeping was to the extent indicated in the Bill cheaper than the cost to single pensioners, especially in cases where the pensioner lived with a family. The Government excused their action by the assertion that economy obliged them to insert this provision. He would have preferred to see economy in another direction in this Bill. He would even have preferred to see some slight reduction in the amount of pension all round, and distasteful though such a reduction would have been to him, he would have preferred it to the heartless penalisation of old couples. The main defence of the Government had been that the provision was not intended to be permanent. That was the worst possible defence. Why should they stereotype an injustice because it could be reconsidered in a little while? When would they have the opportunity of reconsidering it? Acts passed in the first instance as temporary had an unfortunate knack of continuing on the Statute-book untouched for years and years. A glaring instance of this had been the Act passed sixty-one years ago relieving owners of personal property from the payment of rates in respect of that personal property. This was felt to be unjust at the time to owners of real property, so the operation of the Act was limited to a single year, at the end of which the whole matter was to be reconsidered, but as hon. Gentlemen knew, it had remained untouched ever since. If this provision was unjust surely it should not be allowed to pass even in a temporary form, and he further expressed the hope that in view of the general dislike of the same by all parties in the House, the Government would reconsider their provision.

MR. J. W. WILSON (Worcestershire, N.), as one who had been a loyal supporter of the Government and of the Chancellor of the Exchequer all through the debate, most earnestly urged the right hon. Gentleman to reconsider the decision of the Government upon this Amendment. He had had some experience of old-age pensions, but he believed that a distinction where old people were living together, whether married or unmarried, was one which would strike the public as unfair and unjust, and from a practical point of view it would defeat its own object. In the matter of the aged married couples one of the greatest objections to the Poor Law system used to be that the old people were compelled to live separately. The old people ought to be encouraged to live together, but under this Bill they would be penalised if they did so. One shilling and threepence was a large sum to these poor old people. The whole tendency of modern Poor Law legislation had been in the direction of enabling old married people to live together, and everybody had been saying that they ought to live together. It would do the Bill a lot of harm if old people were to go to the country and say they were penalised for living together. He would not take up any further time, as many other hon. Members desired to speak, but he felt strongly that if the Bill was passed with this blot upon it it would incur a great deal of discredit and there would not be much saving from a financial point of view.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the Committee might depend upon it that if the Government had shown any reluctance to respond to the appeal made to them by Members who had faithfully supported them, it was not because they were not in full sympathy with the object of the Amendment, but for purely financial considerations. It was with the greatest reluctance that they inserted this provision in the Bill at all. There was precedent for it in the case of New South Wales, where they had an abatement of exactly the same extent, and in Denmark. He thought they had a similar abatement, but working on a different principle, in New Zealand. There was a good deal of reason for it, quite apart from the financial consideration. The Government had considered the matter most carefully; they had considered it even to thousands; but at the same time they had allowed a margin for contingencies. He had to look at the Amendments to the Bill as a whole, and from the financial point of view. It was very easy to vote for a popular Amendment, and there was nothing more popular than increasing the amount to be found by the Treasury. If this were the only Amendment of its kind, his difficulty would not be a very considerable one. If he were in a position to deal with the House as with a single person, he would say to that one person: "Very well, Is this the end of your demands? If it is, I will close with you." But was it the end of their demands? That was really what he would like to know. If the House would vote for this Amendment on the understanding that they would not support any other Amendment of its kind, making demands upon the Exchequer, then he would be prepared to meet them.

LORD R. CECIL: Yes.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the noble Lord opposite was an ardent supporter of every Amendment, because he would like to overload the Bill, because he wanted to sink the ship, and, therefore, the more Amendments of this kind they could pile on the better he would be pleased. But that was not the object of the friends of old-age pensions. Next week he would be face to face with all sorts of demands about pauperism. If it were understood that this was to be the end of the demands upon the Exchequer, then he would close with the House upon that principle. Was this the thing which the Committee most wanted done? [Cries of "Yes."] Then they must not presently come to him asking for further concessions of unlimited amounts. No doubt the Members of the Labour Party, who wanted to reduce the age limit to sixty-five, were not prepared to accept that view; but he believed the vast majority of Members of the House were prepared to try the experiment of old-age pensions within the limited means which the Government had at their disposal. He had no right to claim the support of some hon. Gentlemen, but he relied on the support of the vast majority on the assumption that they were prepared to try the experiment. He knew that it was very difficult to resist a popular Amendment. It was very difficult also to put on the bulk of Members the necessity of going down to their constituencies and saying: "I, at any rate, voted against the proposal of the Government." He wished to be perfectly frank. It was the easiest thing in the world to cast blame upon others. He could quite see from the direction which the debate had taken that there was a real and deep feeling that this concession ought to be granted, and under those circumstances, and relying entirely upon the support of the majority of the Members of the House to enable the Government to resist all further demands on the Exchequer, he was prepared to accept the Amendment.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN thought that all Members, no matter where they sat, would congratulate the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the dexterity which he had shown in a very difficult situation. Those on that side who were in favour of the Amendment might be congratulated on having secured its adoption. He did not mean to say that they by their unaided efforts had secured this concession from the Government, but they had reason to congratulate themselves that it had been secured. He thought he had some right to express a feeling of gratification because on the first occasion on which he spoke after the scheme was announced he took exception to this unfortunate provision. He had been consistent, and on every opportunity he had attempted to induce the Government to reconsider what he thought to be a most unhappy, most irritating, and most unjust provision. But he was not sure that the majority of the Committee were to be congratulated upon the terms which had been extorted from them in order to secure the concession. The right hon. Gentleman could not, it was true, consult his Party individually, but he himself had heard more than one of them refuse to give the assent which he required from them. But it was not fair to the House at large for the right hon. Gentleman to attempt, in return for this concession, to bind every individual in it to certain terms, and though he and his friends were anxious not to overload the scheme with expensive additions they entirely declined to be any parties to the bargain which had been made. In their opinion there was no necessity for any such bargain at all. His hon. friend the Member for Devonshire had already said that if no more money were available he would sooner save money out of the pensions at large than that those old people who were living together should be subject to the restriction which was proposed. He himself went further. They had not yet dealt with the Budget. He ventured to say that there were funds available to make this scheme a better pension without doing anything which even the greatest purist in free trade would consider contrary to his principles, for simply by retaining that portion of the existing taxation of the country which the Budget proposed to throw away there would be sufficient means available for doing this act of justice to old and deserving couples living together. So much he said for the purpose of making his own position clear. He would address one observation to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. They knew the price of the concession which had just now been given to them. Hon. Members, though not individually, still in the mass, were bound, whatever arguments they might use, however convincing the case they or others might bring forward on the floor of the House, henceforth to reject every Amendment which would add to the expense of the scheme, in order that they might have this one concession. Why was the Government to be able to extort such a bargain from their followers? No one who had sat in the House since the discussion began, or who had heard the references made on this subject on previous occasions, could doubt that the universal feeling of the House was in favour of the Amendment which the Government had now accepted. He defied any Government, even a Government with a majority of 300, to sit through an unrestricted debate, not curtailed by closure, and maintain a position which was repugnant to the universal feeling of the House. The only reason why the Government were able to strike a bargain of this kind was that hon. Gentlemen below the gangway had put the yoke closer upon Ministers who sat accordingly with their eyes on the clock instead of having their thoughts on the subject.

Mr. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) hoped the discussion would now end, so that before the guillotine fell at 7.30 a vote might be come to on the question whether the pension age should be seventy- or sixty-five.

Lord R. CECIL thought the only person who was entitled to sympathy was the First Lord of the Admiralty, who had just committed himself to the statement that the finances of the Bill had been most carefully considered to a halfpenny, and that therefore it was impossible to increase the cost of the pension scheme. It was now clear that the finances of the scheme had not been carefully considered, and that the Government looked to the chapter of accidents to show them a way out of their difficulties as they arose.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) said he had an Amendment on the Paper which arose out of a ruling given by the Chairman in regard to the meaning of the words "the receipt of an old-age pension," in Clause 2.

*The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. Member speak to the Amendment now before the Committee?

*Mr. REES said he was speaking to his own Amendment. He submitted that his Amendment and that immediately before the Committee were intimately connected. He was glad of the decision which the Government had arrived at because he believed that no scheme which would penalise any section of the public would be acceptable, least of all a section of the public so deserving as the old married couples, who had done their duty to the State in their day and generation.

And, it being half-past Seven of the Clock, the Chairman proceeded, pursuant to the Order of the House of 17th June, to put forthwith the Question on the Amendment already proposed from the Chair.

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out, to the word 'any,' in line 13, stand part of the clause," put, and negatived.

Remaining words to the end of line 16 omitted.

The Chairman then proceeded successively to put forthwith the Questions necessary under the Order of the House of 17th June to dispose of the business to be concluded at half-past Seven of the Clock this day.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2:

Amendment—

"In page 2, line 4, to leave out subsection (2)."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George*,)—made.

Question put, "That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 341; Noes, 124. (Division List No. 137.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Acland-Hood, Rt.Hn Sir Alex.F
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn. Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt.Hn. Sir H.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury, E.)
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barlow, Percy (Bedford)

Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Dev'np'r t
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cave, George
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Chamberlain, Rt Hn J. A. (Worc.
Chance, Frederick William
Cheetham, John Frederick
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clive, Percy Archer
Clough, William
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, David (Montgomery Co
Davies, Ellis William (Eikon)
Davies, M. Vaughan-(Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Dobson, Thomas W.
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duckworth, James

Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gardner, Ernest
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Griffith, Ellis J.
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r.)
Harmsworth, R L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)

Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Maclean, Donald
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Calmont, Colonel James
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce William (Limehouse)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.

Powell Sir Francis Sharp
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Robertson,SirG Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford,East)
Smith,F.E. (Liverpool,Walton)
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley,Hn.A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Starkey, John R.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J. E.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J W.H.(Somerset,E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward,W.Dudley (Southampt'n
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt Hn.E.(Clackmannan
Wason,John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Barnard, E. B.
Bell, Richard
Bethell,Sir J H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clynes, J. R.
Collings, Rt.Hn.J.(Birmingh'm
Cooper, G. J.
Craik, Sir Henry
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Curran, Peter Francis
Dalrymple, Viscount
Devlin, Joseph
Dillon, John
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Farrell, James Patrick
Ffrench, Peter
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Gill, A. H.
Glover, Thomas
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Haddock, George B.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Hodge, John
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hudson, Walter
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kelley, George D.
Kerry, Earl of
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King,Sir Henry Seymour(Hull)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Long,Col.Charles W. (Evesham
Lundon, W.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Mackarness, Frederick C.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh Jeremiah (Down S)
MacVeigh Charles (Donegal E.)
M'Killop, W.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Meagher, Michael
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mooney, J. J.
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Muldoon, John
Murphy, John (Kerry, East)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Nolan, Joseph
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady J.
O'Kelly,James (Roscommon,N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Power, Patrick Joseph
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Richards,Thomas (W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Seddon, J.
Shackleton, David James
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley GeorgeD.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Stanier, Beville

Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Summerbell, T.
Taylor John W. (Durham)
Thomas,David Alfred (Merthyr
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Thornton, Percy M.
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wardle George J.
Wilkie, Alexander
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Charles Duncan.

Clause 3:

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) moved to omit the words : "be disqualified for receiving, or continuing to," and so to amend the clause that it would read : "A person shall not receive an old-age pension under this Act," etc. The reason why he moved the Amendment was to secure an even and equitable administration of the Act, and for that purpose the opening words should be in the definite form he suggested. The clause was drafted on the analogy of the disqualification for registration as a Parliamentary elector, but as the right hon. Gentleman knew full well the qualification for registration as a Parliamentary elector was a very different thing from not being placed on the register. An enormous number of people were on the register who did not vote, and a number were qualified who were not on the register. It would be eminently undesirable that that state of things should take place with regard to old-age pensions, because it might create great embarrassment to a large number of people. He suggested that in order to secure even and equitable administration the words should be definite, and should run : "A person shall not receive." It was not sufficient to say he was to be disqualified from receiving, because it might very well be that what was a disqualification in one district would not be known in another, and they might not be cut off from the pension list. For these reasons he thought he was justified in pressing this Amendment on the Government. He begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, lines 7 and 8, to leave out the words 'be disqualified for receiving or continuing to.' "—(*Mr. Courthope.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

SIR W. ROBSON said the hon. Member had described his Amendment as a small one. The hon. Gentleman might be right in his description, but he himself could not see its utility. The language and object of the clause was explicit. It laid down statutory conditions as to disqualifications, and he thought, on the whole, the words of the Act were more explicit than the suggested Amendment of the hon. Member. He could not accept it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

LORD R. CECIL said the Amendment he was about to propose raised the same point which was raised earlier in the evening by another hon. Member, but was withdrawn owing to the difficulties of the debate preventing it from being discussed. The Amendment must be taken as part of three which he had on the Paper, the last of which would have to have some verbal alteration owing to an Amendment carried on the previous day. In order to make it clear, he would read the clause as it would appear with his Amendments in it : "A person shall be disqualified for receiving or continuing to receive the full amount of an old-age pension under this Act, if he is disqualified under sub-section (*a*) of this section, and any part of an old-age pension if he is disqualified under sub-sections (*b*), (*c*), and (*d*) of this section, notwithstanding the fulfilment of the statutory conditions : (*a*) While he is in receipt of any such parochial or other relief as disqualifies for registration as a parliamentary elector, he shall receive such amount by way of old-age pension as is equal to the difference between the weekly value of such relief and 5s. a week,"—(the 5s. a week would have to be altered)—"and, until Parliament otherwise determines, if he has at any time since 1st January, 1908, received or hereafter receives, any such relief." The object of the Amendment was to secure that persons in receipt of outdoor relief should receive 5s. a week. He fully recognised the weight of the argument used by the Prime Minister when discussing this question, that if they were to state generally that everybody should receive a pension under this Act, and did not make some exceptions, the expense would be largely increased, and the paying of 5s. a week to a man receiving a pension out of the local rates would transfer the immense burden of £4,500,000 from the rates to the taxes. What the right hon. Gentleman said was that everybody in receipt of outdoor relief from 1st January this year was not entitled "until Parliament otherwise determines" to a pension, and that every one who actually received outdoor relief, whether it began on 1st January, 1908, or not, was not to receive a pension under this Act. The result of that would be that in the country villages there would be two men of exactly similar condition—one in receipt of a pension by way of outdoor relief, and the other with 5s. a week from the pension fund. That was obviously an anomaly, and the question was whether it could be remedied without throwing an undue burden on the Exchequer. One of the things they must be most careful about was not to throw an undue burden on the Exchequer, and if he could be satisfied with regard to the true resources of the Exchequer as estimated by the Government, if the Government could assure him they could not do this he would not press his Amendment, although he would still say it was an ill-considered Bill. But the Government did not take that line. They said they had considered the scheme, and had provided for it. Then they said, by the mouth of the Prime Minister, that £6,000,000 would be necessary, and later, through the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the cost would be £7,500,000, and then they accepted two Amendments, one on the previous day and one that afternoon, which would increase it to £11,000,000 or £12,000,000. When these were the facts it was difficult for the Opposition to believe that the Government had reached the end of their resources. Resources which had stretched in a few weeks from £6,000,000 to £8,000,000 and would reach to £11,000,000 in a few years were of so elastic a character that it was difficult to believe they would not stretch a little further to remedy this anomaly. Subject to this question of money he could not see any kind of answer to the proposal which sought to level up the position of the man who had 3s. from the rates by giving him 2s. to put him in the same position as the man who had 5s. from the taxes. He would point out that this first part of the clause was permanent and was not governed by the words "until Parliament otherwise determines," and, that being so, why not level up everybody to 5s. a week? What reason could there be for leaving one set of State pensioners with 3s. a week, whilst another set was given 5s. a week? How could that course be defended? Certainly the country would not believe that the State could not afford to give the extra 2s. He begged to move

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 8, after the word 'receive,' to insert the words 'the full amount of.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the very characteristic and ingenious Amendment of the noble Lord raised an important proposition. He felt himself in a difficulty on this owing to the acceptance by the Government of the previous Amendment. Every concession made was used by hon. Members as an argument for the next. The noble Lord said—"You can afford another £400,000, which means you have no end of money, you have the bottomless purse of the Exchequer."

LORD R. CECIL said he did not say that. What he said was that when the Government came and said their resources were limited to £6,000,000, and afterwards they said they were £7,500,000, and then concessions were made bringing the amount up to £8,000,000, he had less confidence in those statements than he otherwise would have.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not think the noble Lord had demonstrated any part of his proposition, but he had made a mistake in every statement he had made. The statement upon which he had based the proposition of £1,500,000 was a creation of his own fertile brain. He hoped that this would be a warning to hon. Gentlemen opposite. Friends of the noble Lord must not rely upon his quotations, nor upon his memory, especially in the matter of figures, and as here the figures were of the very essence of the Bill, this was an important qualification. Let them take the second statement which the noble Lord had made. He said that the Government had gone over the £7,500,000 up to £8,000,000, It was not up to £8,000,000, he was glad to say, but at any rate it was a considerable addition, it was £334,000. He had given those figures some time ago. That was what he meant when he said that every concession was used for the purpose of extracting further concessions, until the position of the Government was so impossible that they would have almost to put an end to the Bill. That was why he made his appeal to the House, and he put it really seriously, with a full knowledge of the resources at their command, that if they had to commit themselves to further expenditure they must really come to the point at which they must reconsider the whole situation, and postpone the Bill for another year. That would be a misfortune to hundreds of thousands of people in the country. The noble Lord had moved an Amendment and he ventured to say that he had not the slightest idea, even within half a million, of what it would cost. He would ask the noble Lord now what was his idea of the cost.

Lord R. CECIL: I am waiting to hear what the right hon. Gentleman has to say.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the noble Lord was a member of the Committee which was dealing with the finance of the country; at any rate he was an individual Member of that House, with responsibility to those whom he represented. More than that, as an item of the House he had responsibility in regard to the 42,000,000 of people in this country; yet he recommended an Amendment to the House of Commons, and he had no idea of what it would cost. Was that not trifling with the House?

Lord R. CECIL: You did not venture to say that to the Labour Party.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that certainly he would say that to anybody who showed anything like the same irresponsibility that the noble Lord had displayed. The noble Lord had done this in the most irresponsible manner, and they knew why. If he were a responsible Minister, as he had not the slightest doubt the noble Lord would be, would he propose anything of the kind? He had no right to recommend it unless he was prepared to accept responsibility for it under those conditions. Would the House believe that the adoption of the noble Lord's Amendment would actually cost nearly £1,000,000? He had given the figures—he thought the amount was £900,000—to the House, and if the noble Lord had only taken the trouble he would have found that he had given them in answer to a Question across the floor of the House after very careful examination. This was an illustration of the sort of thing which was being pressed upon the Government, and he thought most unfairly pressed upon it. It was very easy to move an Amendment and say it would put so many more thousands of people into a much better position than they were in now. It was very easy to do that on one's own responsibility, but the noble Lord knew nothing about the cost, or the limit of the Government's resources. It was true, no doubt, in one sense that the State could afford to wipe off all the disqualifications and make the age sixty-five. The State could afford it, but nobody with a sense of responsibility would begin by sweeping away the disqualifications. They had put this scheme before the House in its first stage. The noble Lord said it was permanent. It was nothing of the kind. The whole of the pauper disqualification was provisional in its character. It had to be reconsidered, and it would come to be reconsidered when they had the Report of the Poor Law Commission before them.

Lord R. CECIL: Look at the drafting of your own clause: "Until Parliament otherwise determines," occurs in the middle of the clause.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that that dominated practically the exclusion of all paupers: "Until Parliament otherwise determines, if he has at any time since 1st January, 1908 received, or hereafter receives, any such relief." That practically dominated the whole of the paupers who would be excluded. Under the circumstances he could not possibly accept the Amendment.

MR. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square) said he could not allow the speech just made by the right hon. Gentleman to pass entirely without reply, because he thought it was remarkable that such a speech should be made in view of the concession to hon. Members below the gangway. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had forgotten that the First Lord of the Admiralty, less than an hour ago, informed the House on his responsibility as a Cabinet Minister that the funds which the Government had at their disposal in connection with this Bill had been calculated to a nicety and that it was not possible to make any further extension in the direction of the demands on those funds so much raided by Members below the gangway. He thought that his noble friend behind him was perfectly justified in testing whether that statement so easily and so soon jettisoned could be jettisoned again. After all, the case put forward by his noble friend in behalf of those who were receiving outdoor relief was an exceedingly strong one. He did not believe that anyone who knew our villages would doubt that in the course of a very few weeks there would be the strongest possible pressure put upon the Government on behalf of these very people, who would be compelled to see their neighbours receiving 5s. a week while they were receiving a less sum. They would see men receiving the 5s. who had in no sense been as well behaved, or as orderly, or as thrifty as they themselves had been, but who received the pension just because they happened to have reached the age of seventy. They would be receiving 3s. a week, for the very reason perhaps that they had endeavoured to provide more adequately for their families than those who were in receipt of the 5s. He did not think that anyone could dispute that there would be a sense of grievance upon the part of these people, and he thought that his noble friend was perfectly entitled to raise their case, and to see whether in truth and in fact what the Chancellor of the Exchequer called a bargain was made in that ingenious speech which they had heard forty minutes ago. Notwithstanding what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, and notwithstanding that he had protested three or four times in the course of his speech that it was a bargain, he thought he would find from the actual voting below the gangway that he had made that proposition on very insufficient material. Though he did not speak on the merits of this clause, after what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said he would suggest that his noble friend should not press his Amendment to a division, though after the exhibition of the squeezability of the Government he was perfectly justified in endeavouring to extract a further definite explanation.

MR. BOWLES said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that it was impossible to accept the Amendment solely on the ground that it would cost a million of money, and that the noble Lord ought to have known that it would cost that amount because he had already informed the House of the fact. He should like to know when the right hon. Gentleman informed the House, and under what circumstances, because neither he nor, as far as he knew, any of his friends had any knowledge of that circumstance. But he must admit that the statement, if it was made, had reference to the 10s. limit. As his right hon. friend had said, it seemed to him that it was impossible to justify the setting up of two classes of persons in receipt of State relief, one getting very much less than the other, although of equal or even better character. The right hon. Gentleman was utterly mistaken in his reading of his own clause, subsection (*a*). The right hon. Gentleman made a great point of the whole of this disqualification's being provisional; it would all, he said, have to be reconsidered sooner or later, probably sooner rather than later, and the clause was drafted with that view. The right hon. Gentleman was clearly mistaken, as could be seen by reading the words, which meant that a person should be disqualified from receiving or continuing to receive the old-age pension while he was in receipt of any such parochial or other relief, "until Parliament otherwise determines, if he has at any time since 1st January, 1908, received, or hereafter receives, any such relief." That was as clear an announcement as had ever been put into a Bill. The words clearly meant that a person who was in receipt of any such parochial or other relief was to be disqualified, that was, if he was in receipt of relief before the 1st January, 1908, or after that date. This seemed to him another instance of the extraordinary haste and carelessness with which this scheme had been put before them, and which could not be justified either in reason or in justice. The right hon. Gentleman had refused the Amendment because he said that his means were small, and the Government found themselves increasingly unable to make their scheme square in any one of its joints with the claims of ordinary justice and reason.

*MR. DICKINSON said he fully realised, the generous way in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had met them on the last question. He personally did not believe if he had adhered to his Bill he would have been defeated, and it was all the more generous of him to meet them to that extent and he fully realised that it would not be just or wise to try and bring in on this occasion the existing paupers. But he had put down an Amendment a little lower down to meet the point which has been raised by the noble Lord and put into the clause exactly what he understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to have said, that he intended to leave the whole question of the treatment of paupers open for further discussion at a later period. His proposition was merely to move the words "until Parliament otherwise determines," up to the first words of subsection (*a*) so that it might be perfectly clear that the whole question of the treatment of existing paupers should also be open to consideration when the proper time arrived.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said the right hon. Gentleman had made a very severe attack on the noble Lord for bringing this subject forward at all. The noble Lord asserted that there was a most glaring anomaly and desired to draw from the Chancellor of the Exchequer a statement of the cost of removing of such an anomaly. The right hon. Gentleman lately had adopted the policy of not merely burking debate and not listening to fair criticism, but of keeping back the printed statement which he had promised to give the House. He asked him again whether he intended to keep his promise of giving the House the printed replies of the friendly societies. As they got through the Bill clause by clause they saw how fully justified they were in saying that it was not an honest Bill and that it was juggling with the country. When the Secretary of State for War spoke he let the cat out of the bag.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN (MR. CALDWELL, Lanarkshire, Mid.): The hon. Member must confine himself to the Amendment.

MR. R. DUNCAN said that this was part of a larger measure involving parochial relief. To form an opinion whether this was an anomaly or not they must know the experience of men who had been dealing with such questions all their lives. But the right hon. Gentleman kept back information which they ought to have to form any intelligent opinion, and there was no response to their appeal. The right hon. Gentleman was afflicted with deafness on both sides, a most unfortunate qualification for a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The noble Lord asked what his proposal would have cost, and instead of taking a straightforward course the right hon. Gentleman delivered a severe attack on the noble Lord, and then at last came out with the figure, but altogether ignored the real question whether this was an anomaly or not.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL (Dublin University) said that anybody who read subsection (*a*) would see that the noble Lord was absolutely right and the Chancellor of the Exchequer absolutely wrong in the construction of the clause, and he certainly asked the noble Lord to persist in the Amendment and go to a division unless he received an assurance that the Amendment standing in the name of the hon. Member opposite would be accepted, because without some such Amendment it would be impossible to give this section the construction for which the Chancellor of the Exchequer contended. Sub-section (*a*) dealt with two classes of disqualification. The first was the actual receipt of Poor Law relief while the pension was running, and as to that the power of reconsideration of the disqualification by Parliament was not reserved; it was only when they came to the second disqualification, the actual receipt subsequent to 1st January, 1908, of Poor Law relief, even before the pension had begun to run, that power was reserved for Parliament to reconsider the situation. Therefore, the criticism of the noble Lord was absolutely right, and it was another illustration of the apparent want of knowledge on the part of the Government of the construction of many of the provisions of the Bill. Of course, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared to accept the Amendment of the hon. Member behind him, it would facilitate their attitude to the Amendment now under discussion. If the words "until Parliament otherwise determines" were set out at the top of the clause, both matters would be kept open for the further and future consideration of Parliament. That was one of the main arguments pointed out by the noble Lord, and it was hardly fair and somewhat unusual for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he made a patent blunder in the construction of the clause, to attack the noble Lord for exercising his constitutional right of suggesting a remedy for the mistake. Nor was it hardly a fair way to deal with it for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ask the noble Lord if he had calculated what the expense would be. They asked these questions for information. Amendments were brought forward for the very purpose of eliciting details as to the effect any proposed change would have. He could only express his regret that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in dealing with the very temperate and moderate speech of the noble Lord had thought fit to indulge in the observations which he had, particularly as it was absolutely plain that the mistake of construction was not on the part of the noble Lord, but on that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) said he had waited a moment in case the Chancellor of the Exchequer saw fit to rise to reply to the speech which had just been made, and he was surprised that he had not done so. The Amendment was one of a most important character, but the right hon. Gentleman had refused it on account of the cost. In the course of his speech he had made a somewhat ferocious attack upon his noble friend and it certainly surprised him that the right hon. Gentleman should expect that the noble Lord should know more about the details of his own Bill than the right hon. Gentleman did himself. They had not those facilities for knowing what the cost of Amendments such as this would be. They were moved in order to draw from the right hon. Gentleman himself what the cost would be.

*THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member must remember that more than two Members had referred to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said.

MR. STANLEY WILSON said he quite agreed that the cost was too much. He had listened with amazement to one statement that the right hon. Gentleman had made. He had denied that the Government had made any miscalculation with regard to the cost of their scheme. That point ought to be cleared up, because the Prime Minister, in his Budget statement, said the scheme was to cost the country £6,000,000. He would like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman would contradict that statement.

MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put," but the Deputy Chairman withheld his assent and declined then to put that Question.

MR. STANLEY WILSON said the Prime Minister stated that the cost of the scheme would be £6,000,000. [Cries of "Order."] Subsequently the Chancellor of the Exchequer said it would cost £7,300,000.

*The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is not in order at this point.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON: The same statement was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and you did not rule him out of order. [Cries of "Order, order."]

*The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer may use an expression, but it does not follow that it must be allowed to form the subject of a discussion.

Lord R. CECIL said he did not complain in the least of the attack of the right hon. Gentleman. Had it been much more severe he would have made considerable allowances for it considering the circumstances under which the Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke. The right hon. Gentleman had accused him of inaccuracy and irresponsibility. The argument he used was based upon the statement of the Prime Minister, made when he was introducing the Budget, that the cost of the scheme would be £7,440,000. Later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the actual amount would be £6,000,000.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: For next year.

Lord R. CECIL repeated that the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were to the effect that in any year the cost was not likely to exceed £6,000,000. Before the Chancellor of the Exchequer asserted that he was guilty of gross inaccuracy he should at least have done his colleague the Prime Minister the justice of reading the statement he made to the House. So much for the charge of inaccuracy. Now in regard to the charge of irresponsibility. He was not anxious to press this point unduly, but when he moved this Amendment the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not in his place and did not hear what he said, but he made it clear to the Committee that he did not intend to press the Amendment if the right hon. Gentleman could assure him that it would cost so much as to make it impossible for the Government to accept it. It was quite true that the right hon. Gentleman had given him information in answer to a question that it would probably cost £1,000,000.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: £900,000.

Lord R. CECIL said that under the circumstances he would ask leave to withdraw his Amendment.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON asked why he had been ruled out of order for raising the same point which the noble Lord had been allowed to discuss.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said he had allowed it in the case of the noble Lord because he was personally interested.

Mr. STANLEY WILSON said he also was personally interested in it. [Cries of "Order."]

Amendment negatived.

*Mr. DICKINSON moved an Amendment providing that "until Parliament otherwise determines" a person shall be disqualified for receiving or continuing to receive an old-age pension while he is in receipt of parochial or other relief as disqualifies for registration as a Parliamentary elector, and if he has at any time since 1st January, 1908, received any such relief. He said that at present the clause left open the door for future discussion as to whether, if a man had once received Poor Law relief, he should thereby become permanently incapacitated from receiving a pension. The first portion of the subsection, however, laid it down definitely that under no circumstances should a pension be payable to a person who was at the moment in receipt of Poor Law relief. It was because he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give the Committee some assurance that this subject would also be left open for future consideration that he moved his Amendment. His reason for asking this was that there were many districts in the Metropolitan area where, unless some means were provided whereby the Poor Law authorities could supplement the pensions, the pension offered by the Bill would be so inadequate that it would not keep the poorest people out of the workhouse. There was nothing unusual in Poor Law relief being allowed to poor people in receipt of small pensions or who had a small amount of property. A large number of people in London received relief because their means were not sufficient to keep them from starvation, and the guardians therefore supplemented the small means which the poor people had. It was necessary that there should be some means whereby the guardians could supplement the pensions, and this was especially the case in the Metropolis. In London perhaps there was a condition of affairs very different from that in the rest of the country. London had very largely a system of outdoor pauperism. In London the number of indoor paupers exceeded the number of outdoor paupers, whereas in the rest of the country the number of persons who receive outdoor relief as compared with those who received indoor relief were in the proportion of 3 to 1. It was a common practice in other parts of the country to give outdoor relief to poor old people, but in London there was a large mass of poor old people who were compelled to go into the workhouse, and what one hoped this pension scheme would obviate was the constant driving of old people into the workhouse. One reason for driving them into the workhouse in London was the cost of living. The amount paid for outdoor relief would never pay the whole cost of their maintenance, and unless they had some other means of living outside, they were obliged to go into the workhouse. The Committee of 1899 which was presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wimbledon made a recommendation as to the amount of pensions which had not been followed by the Government. The Committee recommended that the amount should vary from 5s. to 7s. a week according to the cost of living in a district, and that, of course, would meet the case of great towns such as London where the cost of living was very much in excess of what it was elsewhere. That system of differentiation held good in other countries. In Denmark the old-age pension given to persons in towns was higher than that given to persons living in the country. But he could quite well see that the difficulty of differentiating between different localities in this country was almost insuperable, and he could well understand why the Government did not see their way to have a different scale for London as against other parts of the country. For that reason he did not ask the Government to reconsider that question. But he did think that means would have to be found for making some differentiation in the position of those living in places like London. The House was well aware that the cost of living in London was considerably more than elsewhere, and when outdoor relief was given it was often as much as 5s. a week, and sometimes it was more. He did not believe that by merely giving a pension of 5s. they would enable a person who had nothing else to live in London. He hoped that before they had to consider this question again next year the Government might find some means by which a locality might add to the amount of the pension payable to the pensioners living in that locality. He understood from the right hon. Gentleman that he did intend to leave the whole question open. He himself did not wish to pre-judge the question at the present moment. He felt very strongly that unless some measures were taken whereby pensions could be made more adequate to meet the needs of cases like that of London, not only would persons living in London fail to live on the pension, but they would have to go into the workhouse, and under these conditions Londoners would be paying for the rest of the country, while not getting the share they were entitled to. He hoped the Government might see their way to accept the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, after '(a),' to insert the words 'Until Parliament otherwise determines.' "—(*Mr. Dickinson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) said he wished to say a few words on the technical aspect of the Amendment, because it was not easy to follow it unless one was acquainted with all that would be implied by the introduction of the words "Until Parliament otherwise determines." Hon. Members would see that there were in the clause two distinct disqualifications. The second disqualification was much wider in its scope than the first. The first disqualification would apply to any person who was in receipt of pauper relief, and that was intended to be as permanent as any other part of the Bill. The second part of subsection (a) was intended to be more or less in the nature of a transitory provision. The introduction of the words "Until Parliament otherwise determines" at the beginning of the subsection would tend to convey the impression that disqualification by reason of the receipt of such parochial relief as disqualified for registration was also in the nature of a transitory provision. The whole scheme of the Bill was to keep pension apart from Poor Law relief. It would be undesirable to give pension as an extension of outdoor relief. The Government could not assent to the Amendment—first, because it would increase the financial cost; and, secondly, because it was not desirable to associate the pension scheme with the Poor Law at all.

Mr. JAMES CAMPBELL (Dublin University) said he could understand the Attorney-General if his proposition was to omit the words "Until Parliament otherwise determines." But he could not see that the hon. and learned Gentleman had given any reason why the Government should insist on maintaining these words in the second part, thereby putting a transitory brand on it. The second disqualification was more extensive than the first, but they both contained the same principle—that was to say, they disqualified. What was not clear to his mind was the reason which the Government had for saying that they were determined to adhere to the one disqualification while specially reserving the second as a matter on which Parliament next session might change its mind. He could not see how it was an advantage to retain this brand of transitoriness in regard to disqualification No. 2. He could not see why the same brand should not apply at the beginning of the clause so that it might govern both disqualifications. He thought the country had not yet had an opportunity of making up its mind on the question as to how far the receipt of parochial relief should be any disqualification for receiving a pension. He could not understand why the question of parochial relief as a disqualification should be fixed for all time. His hon. friend, in his opinion, had not given any reason as to the necessity of retaining the first portion of the subsection.

Sir F. BANBURY said that on this occasion he should have much pleasure in supporting the Attorney-General. He had listened with interest to two eminent members of the learned profession who had contradicted each other.

Mr. JAMES CAMPBELL said there was no contradiction; he had accepted entirely the statemment as to the effect of this subsection given by his hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General, and he thoroughly agreed with him.

Sir F. BANBURY said that that was a curious statement to make, because if so, the right hon. and learned Gentleman ought to have supported the Attorney-General. The contention of his hon. friend was that there was no reason why the words "until Parliament otherwise determines" should not be removed from line 12, to line 10. They were told that whatever was in the Bill not qualified by these words was a statutory declaration. The Bill did not establish a statutory declaration in so far as the words which came after the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman were concerned. That was to say, it might be that any person who received parochial or other relief would be able, if Parliament chose to alter the statute, to receive in addition a pension to which he would not otherwise be entitled. He believed that that would be a wrong conclusion. Early in the afternoon he had put a question to the Secretary for War, asking him whether he considered that this Bill was only an extension of the Poor Law —an extension of parochial relief—and the right hon. Gentleman informed the Committee that that was quite wrong.

They, therefore, knew that the Bill as drafted by the Government was not meant to be an extension of parochial relief, and if that was so there should be a statutory declaration that the receipt of parochial relief disqualified from receiving a pension. The Government now said that it was owing to the financial exigencies of the case that they could not afford to give a pension to anyone in receipt of parochial relief on 1st January, 1908. Under these circumstances he should support the Government. The hon. Member for North St. Pancras had said that outdoor relief in London was given in a different manner from outdoor relief in the country, and that the question of the conditions of living in London ought to be equalised with the conditions in other parts of the country. He did not know whether the hon. Gentleman intended to put the additional expense he suggested on the ratepayers or on the taxpayers. He would point out to the hon. Gentleman that in certain parishes in London, such as Poplar, the result of giving outdoor relief had been that the rates went up tremendously. Since the recent investigations of the Local Government Board the outdoor relief had been diminished, and no one had really suffered. As a loyal supporter of the Government and the Party opposite he thought that the best thing that the hon. Gentleman could do would be to withdraw his Amendment as soon as possible. Nearly every Amendment which had been moved from the benches opposite would have had the effect of increasing the cost to the taxpayers, and at the same time of being a great deterrent to honest, hard working, thrifty people who had looked to their own exertions to aid them in time of need, and not to the charity of hon. Members opposite, who, however, did not distribute it out of their own pockets.

*MR. TIMOTHY DAVIES (Fulham) said that the one great virtue of the scheme of the Government was that it entirely separated the pensioner from the Poor Law administration. If the effect of the Amendment would be to enable the amount to be increased out of the rates, it would fall heaviest upon the poorer parishes. If 5s. was insufficient, let the sum provided by the Exchequer be increased out of the taxes rather than the rates.

*SIR CHARLES W. DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said there was great difficulty in allowing this Amendment to pass in order to take the discussion on the proviso; and he wished to be allowed to state his reason why the Committee should not contemplate even the temporary disqualification for a pension by the receipt of parochial relief since 1st January, 1908. It was very doubtful what was the present form of disqualification. The disqualification now rigidly defined was totally different from what it was when Parliament first legislated on this point. The disqualification then was not to apply to medical extras. But it was now held that it did, even if they were temporary only. He was afraid if these words were passed they would remain for very long time. He could not sanction the incorporation of these words until he knew where they were going. At the present moment a man was struck off the register if he accepted a coffin for his child; he was struck off the register if he accepted an honorable donation from certain of our charitable societies, whilst others from societies precisely similar under legal decisions did not disqualify. The legal decisions on the point were extremely arbitrary, and the result of these words would be that one would be taken and another left. In many cases it would be the best who were left, because they would be carefully chosen by the charity for the gift, and it would be those who were not chosen who would get the pensions. There was a "decided" case of last year in which the man was struck off the register because the relief was not held to be medical relief. It was a case where the relief was given unknown to the man himself, who was most indignant about the matter. He was at work, and his wife was suddenly confined and could not cook, and the medical officer ordered bread for the children because the woman could not cook for them. That man was struck off the register for having had relief on that one occasion. He asked a medical officer in London how he would deal with a similar case. He put to him this particular case, and the Committee would see from the reply he received how dexterously this hardship was avoided in London. The reply was—

> "The relieving officers with whom I have to deal always give food on my recommendation without a written order, and where there are little children give it in abundance, technically for the mother as a medical extra."

But in the rural districts where politics came into play it was not avoided, and advantage was taken of this charity. Such a provision might operate with extraordinary unfairness in different counties in some of which a rigid, whilst in others a lax, view was taken. In fact, the unfairness of the position seemed to be such as to prevent the Committee from allowing anything of the kind. He made this statement with a feeling of great responsibility, as he had always avoided pledging himself on old-age pensions. But this legislation having been brought in it was impossible to pass these words without remonstrance.

LORD BALCARRES said the chief cause which animated the hon. Gentleman with regard to this Amendment was not that he anticipated difficulty from disqualification owing to the receipt of outdoor relief, but a wholly different one. He wished to insert the Amendment in order to bring home the fact that the scale of pensions should vary in country and town. 5s. a week in London obviously would not go so far as 5s. in Wiltshire or in County Down. That was the main ground on which this Amendment was moved. He regretted that the Attorney-General in his reply did not indicate in some sense the difficulty involved by making the 5s. of a man living in Clerkenwell equal to the 5s. of the man who lived in the country much more cheaply. He did not press the point, but reminded the Committee of its importance. The hon. Member for St. Pancras was fully justified also by the fact that the Committee had accepted the principle of differentiation in payments, and that being so they were entitled to accept the principle of differentiation in residence. No one knew better than the Postmaster-General the difficulties arising in determining the cost of living in different parts of the country, but it could be done. He thought the hon. Member had done good service in drawing attention to this matter, and he hoped if it could not be decided at this stage it would receive consideration at a later stage.

***MR. JESSE COLLINGS** thought the Amendment was very necessary, because this was a question that would have to be dealt with at the earliest possible moment. These words presumed what everybody already knew, namely, that the question have would to be reconsidered as soon as possible. He was rather surprised at the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean objecting to it. No one knew more about the merits of the question than he, but if a man was disqualified under the circumstances he mentioned it was quite contrary to the law.

***SIR CHARLES W. DILKE**: No, no. I based my statement entirely on "decided" cases.

***MR. JESSE COLLINGS** said he himself drafted the clause, and fought it in the House in the face of great opposition.

***SIR CHARLES W. DILKE**: I began by saying that, contrary to the opinion of this House, the Courts decided otherwise.

***MR. JESSE COLLINGS** said if the medical officer ordered it the man was not disqualified by law. If that were the case, as stated by his right hon. friend, it only increased the necessity for these words, and he did not see why the Government should not accept them. There was a good deal of misrepresentation as to the decrease of taxation, and also with reference to the Poor Law. There always was. He had not found many men of seventy years of age in villages who would object to having their outdoor relief raised from 3s. to 5s. by an old-age pension. The idea of disgrace had been very much magnified; and, if, as the Amendment proposed, the question could be soon reconsidered and a person have his outdoor relief made up to 5s. by a pension, he thought it would be a very good incident in the measure. He could not see why they should not; and he hoped the Government would accept the Amendment.

AN HON. MEMBER submitted that the words of the Amendment were unnecessary. The first part of the subsection said that while a man was in receipt of parochial or such other relief as disqualified him for registration as a Parliamentary elector he should be disqualified for receiving a pension; and the second part said that if he had at any time since 1st January, 1908, received or hereafter received, any such relief he should be disqualified until Parliament should otherwise determine. It seemed to him, therefore, that the words proposed by his hon. friend were absolutely unnecessary.

*MR. G. D. FABER said he supposed the intention of the Amendment was to mark the subsection as being merely a transitory disqualification. If that was so, what became of the dramatic words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the guillotine fell at half-past seven? Clearly the effect of the Amendment, if it were accepted, would be greatly to increase the charge of the service of old-age pensions. He felt himself entirely in consonance with the remark of the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean when he said he could not allow the subsection to pass until he knew where they were going. Did anybody in that House know where they were going? He knew where they were going financially. The moment the Government were squeezed they gave way, if the squeezing was done by the Labour Party. The Government knew who their masters were, and the Labour Party knew who the masters were. He did not know what the squeezing amounted to that day, financially. Therefore, when the right hon. Baronet wanted to know where they were going, he could tell him; in Latin it was: "*Facilis descensus averno.*" They were going down the slippery slope to financial bankruptcy. He was not wanting in sympathy for the aged poor and the destitute of this country, but this House was limited by the financial possibilities of the case. Even the Government had begun to say that they had got so much money and no more. In fact, all they had got was £1,200,000 this year, and the present commitments under this Bill were probably already not less than £8,000,000. He had no doubt himself as to the course he must take on this Amendment, and that was to oppose it, because it infringed the rule laid down by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at half-past seven—the bargain that he made with his own supporters—that no further cost must be imposed on the service of old-age pensions.

MR. DICKINSON said he would with the leave of the House withdraw his Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston) moved to leave out subsection (*a*) and to insert: "(*a*) If he has at any time since the first day of January, nineteen hundred and four, received, or hereafter receives, any parochial or other relief which disqualifies for registration as a Parliamentary elector." He did not think he could propose anything which would increase the cost of the scheme, and he merely desired to get some statement from the Government as to their intentions with regard to the Poor Law. The clause was one of some obscurity, and many Members were still in doubt as to its effect on Poor Law administration, the legal luminaries in the House having been more or less contradictory in their interpretation of certain words. The original idea of old-age pensions was that they should have no connection whatever with Poor Law relief, but that they should be a distinction, and favour those who had not called upon the Poor Law for relief. That idea did not seem to have been absolutely crystallised in the mind of the Government as they had inserted the words: "Until Parliament otherwise determines." The revolution in Poor Law administration which was foreshadowed could not take place for four or five years at least, and he wished to know what it was proposed to do in the interval. If the date of January, 1908, remained, the period of disqualification would grow longer year by year. In all countries where old-age pensions had been a success, it had been the endeavour on the part of those administering them to try to lessen expenditure on the Poor Law. They had had very strong evidence from Denmark where this idea largely prevailed, that the effect of their old-age pension scheme had been to produce a great saving in the relief that would otherwise have been given to people through the Poor Law. They said that no man who had been in receipt of Poor Law relief during the past ten years should receive a pension. The principle that exclusion from Poor Law relief for a considerable period had the effect of saving a large sum of money to the rates appeared in the Report of the Select Committee of 1897, but the Government, so far as he could see, did not seem to have any definite position with regard to it. If they wished old-age pensions to be a stimulus to the poorer classes of the population to keep off the Poor Law, there should be a fairly long period of abstinence required before the pension was received. Instead of that, the proposal was that those who received parish relief for a comparatively short period, only the first few months of this year, should be disqualified. That would be very hard on a number of unfortunate people who had had no notice of what was in the mind of the Government, and they would always have a distinct feeling of grievance. Why, they would ask, did they not know something a little earlier? Why should they be put into a position of not having what their neighbours were getting, simply because there was no notice given of what was going to happen? If the date 1908 was to remain in the Bill, it would mean that this year three or four months would disqualify; that next year there would be a disqualifying period of practically two years; and that the year afterwards a person would have to be three years without parish relief to qualify for a pension.

Mr. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple) asked whether the right hon. Member's Amendment would not make it worse?

*Sir WALTER FOSTER agreed it would make the position slightly worse, but more just. He had moved it formally because a similar plan had been embodied in all other proposals for old-age pensions. If, on the other hand, 1908 was to be a fixed date, and was not to be altered to 1909 and 1910, then they would have a kind of variable quantity in disqualification. He had put this Amendment down solely in order to raise this question and get a statement from the Government with regard to their intention towards these people.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, to leave out subsection (a), and to insert the words '(a) If he has at any time since the first day of January, nineteen hundred and four, received, or hereafter receives, any parochial or other relief which disqualifies for registration as a parliamentary elector.'"—(*Sir Walter Foster.*)

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the effect of this Amendment of his right hon. friend's would be to stiffen the clause very considerably, and make it much more severe than the particular provision which the Government had asked the House to carry. The Chaplin Committee recommended a twenty years exclusion, and in most of the Bills which had been introduced into the House there had generally been a twenty years exclusion. It was formerly considered a proper reason for disqualifying anybody for receiving a pension if he had at any time within twenty years been in receipt of Poor Law relief. That period was thought by the Government to be too severe. A man might through a merely temporary misfortune be compelled to accept relief. The Government could not agree to any Amendment which would stiffen their clause. It had been estimated that the Chaplin Committee's recommendation would exclude 414,000 persons from qualifying for a pension. The Government clause was much milder, and it was estimated by the Local Government Board that only 270,000 would be affected; therefore, they would include 140,000 persons amongst the pensioners who would have been disqualified by every other proposal which had been submitted to the House up to the present time. He would like to dwell upon the fact, too, that this was to be purely provisional, and the Government were so anxious to emphasise the provisional nature of the exclusion that they had introduced words, such as "until Parliament otherwise determines," which were mere surplusage. That was a constitutional commonplace, because everything was "until Parliament otherwise determines." They did not propose to stand even by this very mild clause, beyond the time when they would receive the Report of the Commission, and be able to make some further arrangements. The Government declined to go back on their present proposal. It was the mildest that had yet been suggested and they intended to stand by it. They declined to make it stricter; they also declined to relax it in the present year; and they asked the House to support them in that determination.

*MR. JESSE COLLINGS said the Chancellor of the Exchequer had left out a very important part of the Chaplin Report, an exception on which they laid great stress,—"except in exceptional cases." Let them take a case where a man since 1904 had met with illness or misfortune, which they knew was too common among people of the class they were dealing with. That would be treated as an exceptional case. If it would not then it was a great cruelty. The sub-clause as it stood made poverty a crime. Poverty was often made a crime directly or indirectly. People spoke about the disgrace of being connected with Poor Law relief! They condemned these people to be connected with Poor Law relief, if they wanted relief at all through no fault of their own, by such provisions as this. The clause as it stood was a disgraceful one. It was argued that these limitations would save a lot of money, but this question was not to be settled by considerations of saving money or by logic. It must be settled by humanity. The sub-clause, as it stood, was what the Chancellor of the Exchequer called comparatively mild treatment. He was glad to find that bad as it was in his opinion, the Government refused to make it ten times worse in a direction which could only be characterised as a cruel punishment of misfortune.

MR. SOARES said that those who represented rural constituencies felt very strongly indeed about this clause. He had received several letters about it, and he would read an extract from one of them, which might possibly move the strong heart of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The writer, a constituent of his, said—

> "Opposite me lives an old man who has brought up a family of eight and whose age now is ninety-five. He was compelled about six years ago to accept relief. He has been a lifelong teetotaller and has for fifty years been one of the leaders of Nonconformity and is still an honorary deacon of the Baptist Church."

He was glad to hear the right hon. Gentleman say that this was only a provisional clause. He had also an extract from a speech by the Prime Minister in which he said it was only to last for one year. Later on, instead of these words, "until Parliament otherwise determines," which they all admitted were surplusage, he would move if he had an opportunity that this prohibition should only last until 1st January, 1910. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that this would cost £3,500,000, but it would not if they made some arrangement with the local authority by means of which the amount they now paid out of the rates to relief could, in some way, be arranged. Then it would not cost more than £1,000,000. They were told that the Government wanted to wait until the Poor Law Commission reported, but the noble Lord opposite had said there were going to be twelve reports of that Commission, and the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment said it would take five years to consider the Report. He considered that the Report of the Poor Law Commission would not have nearly as much effect upon this question as the question of rates. He agreed that if the Amendment were accepted every local authority in the country would at once put on the National Exchequer all their paupers over seventy years of age. That would, of course, be a great saving to the rates, which he would like to see, but it would not be a scientific way of dealing with the matter, because in the country districts there were many more people over seventy years of age than there were in the town districts, and consequently it would be a greater boon to rural districts than to urban. He admitted therefore that from the point of view of fairness in voting it would not be quite right for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to accept the Amendment, but he hoped they were not going to wait for the inclusion of these paupers until the rating question was settled. That he wanted the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say distinctly. Once the rating question came up there would be the question of the rating of site values, the question of the House of Lords, and many other great questions to deal with. They could not deal with all those questions next year, so he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give them his pledge that this matter of the inclusion of paupers should be dealt with during the coming session. If he would do that he would be satisfied, and he would vote for him; but unless he gave them an assurance that the exclusion of paupers should not be for more than twelve months from 1st January, 1909, he would vote against him.

MR. WALTER LONG said he rather sympathised with the Chancellor of the Exchequer over the decent burial which had already been given to his pledge. He had had some little difficulty in following the speech of the hon. Member who had just sat down, because he dealt with a variety of subjects, including the House of Lords, and he had racked his brain to understand what was the relation between the House of Lords and dealing with outdoor paupers by reform of the Poor Law. He agreed with him in thinking the Government had failed to appreciate this fact. It must be well known to everybody that there was all the difference in the world between paupers in rural and in urban districts. In a great urban district, with a large rateable value to fall back upon, they could, and did, make a wide distinction between the different classes of paupers. In some unions there were provided such variations of accommodation that they were able to provide for the infirm and for the respectable poor who were there through misfortune, under conditions which were not only humane, but thoroughly satisfactory to themselves, except in so far as the receipt of pauper relief involved the loss of civil rights; and they were able to provide for the able-bodied. But the rural workhouses were full of paupers of the very class who would be given pensions under the Bill. He agreed with the hon. Gentleman that there ought to be some finality in this proposal of the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that the conditions of this Bill were such that they must deal with this question next session. That was all very well. Government often thought in one session that they would have to deal with a particular question in the next session, but circumstances changed in the meantime. They had had a great many questions raised in the past three years that they were told were going to be dealt with, but had found at the last moment that others had taken their place. Unless the Government were prepared to pledge themselves, and he did not see how they could do it—certainly the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not, because it was obvious that such a pledge could only be given after consultation and decision by the Cabinet—this disability must go on and a large number of people, who were in precisely the same position as those who were going to receive pensions, would be disabled until Parliament otherwise determined. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them it meant a very large sum of money. He was not sure that it did. He did not think the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken realised what would be the action of local authorities upon the passing of the Bill. As soon as it became the law that a man attaining a certain age under certain conditions was to receive a pension, why on earth should any board of guardians give him outdoor relief? They would be tempted by the fact that the Exchequer would pay what the rates had hitherto paid. Was the Chancellor of the Exchequer really protecting the revenue in the way he believed? Was he not relying on a broken reed? Was it not far better to deal with the difficulty as it arose now and to make some discrimination? In one or two Amendments which had already been discussed, the difficulty had been raised as to the discretion to be given to the local authorities. He was not sure what estimate the Government was making for the expense of administering the Act. He knew that they proposed to have in each district what they called a pension officer. He believed that official to be absolutely unnecessary. He believed that if the Government would follow the course they had already followed in Committee, and reconsider their Bill with a view to its simplification and the getting rid of all those inquiries which involved investigation into the past history of individuals, and if they would fall back upon a system of pensions to be given according to a statement of facts required by the Bill, the pension committee would do the whole work without any pension officer at all. What was going to be the cost of the pension officers? It would be considerable, and probably it would be greater than at first sight appeared.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the pension officers who would be employed were men who at the present moment were employed for other purposes, and, therefore, the expense would not be very great in respect of pension officers, but there were other expenses which would have to be met.

MR. WALTER LONG said that it was perfectly true that there were other expenses besides those of the pension officers. The pension officers were to be the Excise officers, and if that was so, they were at present doing work for which they were paid, and if they had not sufficient work to do at present, they were being overpaid. He knew something of Excise officers, and he believed they could not have selected more inappropriate men for this work. It the Government tried to obtain the particular kind of exclusion proposed by the Bill they would have the greatest possible difficulty in getting pension committees to carry out the work. If the Government would get rid of inquiries into the history of applicants for pensions many difficulties would vanish, and the work of administration could be done by a pension committee; but there would be great difficulty in getting such a Committee to carry out a system of exclusion, under which they would have to discriminate between two men whose circumstances were precisely similar except as regards the dates at which they received Poor Law relief. The subsection in its present form would force upon local authorities a duty unjust in itself, and one which they would never be able to carry out.

*THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, N.E., Rossendale) said infirm paupers could not be dealt with by the Bill, but as part of Poor Law reform after presentation of the Report of the Commission. A number of such paupers could not live by themselves, even if they were able to receive pensions under the Bill. The expense of a pension officer bore but a small proportion to the general cost, the figures of which had been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was absolutely essential that there should be in the area some representative of the Treasury and the taxpayers, who would suffer if the Act were laxly administered by the local committee. The hon. Member for Barnstaple had admitted that without the subsection local authorities would put their outdoor paupers on the pension list, and suggested that an arrangement might be made with the local authority, but that was one of the objects in view when the report of the Commission came to be considered, and, therefore, the fact of the temporary provision had been emphasised. There need be no doubt that the pressure of the facts would ensure the carrying out of the revision of Poor Law administration. He hoped the Committee would agree with the Government that the Amendment could not be accepted. The Government therefore could not accept the Amendment.

*MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said he did not know whether the hon. Member for Ilkeston was serious in his Amendment, or whether he wished to prevent the Committee getting a direct vote on subsection (a). Whatever his intention might be, he had used arguments about giving stimulus to the people in the country to prevent them having recourse to Poor Law relief, and in order to make that stimulus more effective for the future he had put on the Paper a proposal to carry back evidence of receipt of relief for three years.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER said that his object in proposing to omit the first part of subsection (a) was to elicit from the Government a statement of their intention with reference to the Poor relief.

*MR. BRIDGEMAN said he was afraid he did not understand from the way the Amendment was read out that the effect of it would be as described by the hon. Gentleman in his speech. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give the Committee a little more information with regard to the cost of his proposal if it were carried out. As yet the right hon. Gentleman had said nothing to indicate what the cost would be. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that there were 270,000 people who would be included if subsection (a) were left out; but he did not say how many of that number were in receipt of outdoor and how many were in receipt of indoor relief. It would be interesting to know the division between the two classes; because if they were going to give a pension of 5s. only to those receiving outdoor relief, it would make a great difference. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman might perhaps say what the additional expense would be if the pension were merely confined to those receiving outdoor relief. Really the whole debate showed both on this and on the previous Amendment how utterly impossible it was to attempt to devise any system other than a universal system or a contributory scheme. Every discussion they had had made it clearer and clearer that these were the only two possible solutions of the problem, and that any compromise between the two was out of the question. The right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean had adduced several instances of the hardship which would be caused if this subsection were carried in its present form. As the Bill stood, by subsection (a), if a man's wife was in a pauper's asylum he would thereby be disqualified as a voter, and would become also disqualified for a pension. He could hardly believe that that was the intention of the Government. He was reminded by an hon. friend that if a man had a child in a pauper asylum he would also be disqualified. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider some alteration of the subsection which would prevent such specific cases of injustice occurring.

*SIR BRAMPTON GURDON (Norfolk, N.) said he had no objection to the first part of the subsection, but he feared that if the second part dealing with those who received parochial relief in the present year stood as it was, a great deal of hardship and misery would be caused. There were a great many poor people trying to keep out of the poorhouse in order to obtain the pension on 1st January. The right hon. Member for South Dublin said that the occupants of the rural workhouses were the class who would receive pensions.

MR. WALTER LONG said that his statement was that the occupants of the rural workhouses were poor people who were entirely broken down, and that the residue of the rural poor were those who received outdoor relief. In towns it was different.

*SIR BRAMPTON GURDON said that very few of those who were now in the workhouses would get a pension. They could not leave the workhouse, because they were so infirm that they required constant care, healthful food, and every comfort which could possibly be given to them. Therefore, he thought that if the last part of the section were omitted, the cost would not be so great as the Chancellor of the Exchequer anticipated. He still hoped, even now, that the Government would give way.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.,) asked whether the right hon. Gentleman accepted the view of his hon. friend that the effect of this clause in its present shape would be that if the wife or children of a man were in receipt of Poor Law relief the man himself would be excluded from the benefits of the Bill. If so, then it was a hard case.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said in reply to the hon. Member for Oswestry that the Government estimate was that out of the 270,000 persons who would be excluded, 200,000 would be outdoor poor and 70,000 indoor. In answer to the hon Member who had just sat down, he stated that this large exclusion was not intended, and he promised to look into the question and see it put right.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON suggested that the word "himself" or "personally" in receipt of relief would meet the case. But there was also the case of the man who wilfully allowed his wife and children to go on the poor rate.

SIR WALTER NUGENT (Westmeath, S.) said that the agricultural population of Ireland were very much affected by this clause, and he hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find some way of removing the disability indicated. Old people in Ireland were frequently sent into the lunatic asylums in order to avoid being paid for, owing to the poverty of their families.

LORD R. CECIL submitted that unless the pledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was carried out now it could not be done at all. It could not be done on Report, and certainly it could not be done in another place.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE replied that he did not expect to get the whole of the disqualification clause disposed of that night. An Amendment lower down on the Paper, which could not be reached that night, raised this point, and he could look into that also. It depended on some decisions, as he understood, and therefore there would be time available for consideration.

MR. WALTER LONG asked whether by that statement the right hon. Gentleman proposed to adjourn the proceedings at this point. He did not press that question; he merely desired to know how the suggestion was to be carried out. The right hon. Gentleman had stated that there were certain decisions which he would have to look into. He would not press for an adjournment, but he failed to see how he proposed to carry out his suggestion if he was going to pass to the next Amendment.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said there was not very much time left, and he assumed that there would be a division on this. After that there were one or two small Amendments, so that the other Amendment would not be reached.

Amendment negatived.

SIR F. BANBURY moved to leave out the words "any such," and said that with consequential Amendments the clause would read: "While he is in receipt of parochial or other relief and until Parliament otherwise determines," and so on. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not very sure about the words himself, because he had two Amendments on the Paper. That went to show that the clause required some Amendment. He did not see why the words "parochial relief" required any other qualification. The receipt of parochial relief should disqualify any person from receiving a pension. The right hon. Gentleman himself or the First Lord of the Admiralty had told them that parochial relief had always been excluded in all the schemes which had been put before the country. If that was correct, he failed to see why it was necessary to put in any qualification. It was a plain and simple form to say that if a person was in receipt of parochial relief he should not receive a pension. There was a growing tendency in the House to pass a measure to provide that the receipt of Poor Law relief, medical or otherwise, should not be a disability with regard to the Parliamentary franchise. Hon. Members below the gangway were always bringing in measures to that effect, and if his Amendment was not carried the Chancellor of the Exchequer might be in the position of having a Bill brought in which said that the receipt of Poor Law relief should not disqualify for registration as a Parliamentary elector. It had been held by hon. Gentlemen below the gangway that the receipt of Poor Law relief during a trade dispute ought not to disqualify a man from the Parliamentary franchise. Already people whose children required feeding were exempt from being deprived of the franchise, and gradually Amendments would be moved, with the result that a very large increase would be put upon the cost of the pension scheme. It was because he wanted to make the right hon. Gentleman's position easier, and to enable him to go down to posterity as a creditable Chancellor of the Exchequer, that he desired to leave out "any such," followed by a consequential Amendment to safeguard that which he believed the Government really desired, that it should be stamped upon the Bill that parochial relief should disqualify from receiving old-age pensions. He failed altogether to see where the question of the Parliamentary vote came in. The real question was: Did the receipt of parochial relief disqualify, or did it not? He believed it should, and that that was the intention of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. Therefore, in order to give them an opportunity of adhering for once to their original intention, he begged to move.

Amendment proposed—

"In page 2, line 10, to leave out the words 'any such.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'any' stand part of the clause."

MR. HARCOURT said that the Amendment, if seriously entertained by the Committee, would be a very wide one, and he did not think it would take long to explain why the Government could not for a moment contemplate its acceptance. The Amendment and its consequential words would, in effect, provide that any parochial relief, not merely the relief which disqualified for the franchise, should disqualify a man from receiving a pension. He was not sure that that might not apply to medical relief, free vaccination, or free meals for school children. They had had many proposals for extending the Bill, but none as yet that imposed such serious restrictions as the present. Medical relief did not disqualify for the franchise, though certain interpretations by the Courts had run counter to the intent of Parliament in 1885, and if they saw their way to insert words in the Bill to make it clear that no medical assistance or relief should disqualify for a pension they would be glad to do so, but there was no intention to accept words which would be such a serious restriction.

SIR F. BANBURY pointed out that the acceptance of the Amendment would in no way prevent the Government or anybody else, including himself, from moving a consequential Amendment which would exempt medical relief. It would be perfectly easy to say that parochial relief, except medical relief, should disqualify. The real object of his Amendment was to get rid of the words "Parliamentary franchise," for the reason he had stated. His belief was that, with the House of Commons as it was now, the probability would be that Parliamentary relief would be extended, and all sorts of things which were not included now would be brought in. He would be quite willing if there was any feeling on the question of medical relief to allow, if his Amendment was carried, words to be put in which would except medical relief, so that it should continue to be given.

Amendment negatived.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Chairman do report Progress; and ask leave to sit again"—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*)—put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

Adjourned at five minutes after Eleven o'clock.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CLXXXIX.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) HOUSE OF LORDS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Assizes & Quarter Sessions [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Committee 22nd June (1265)
*Appellate Jurisdiction [H.L.]	*Lord Loreburn*	Read 1^a 18th June (996)
*Commons [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Read 1^a 16th June (686)
*Companies [H.L.]	*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell*	Committee 16th June (686) Report 22nd June (1230) Read 3^a and passed 23rd June (1480)
Marriage Act Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord James*	Read 1^a 17th June (839)
Matrimonial Causes [H.L.]	*Earl Russell*	Read 1^a 23rd June (1463)
Nurses Registration [H.L.]	*Lord Ampthill*	Read 1^a 23rd June (1463)
*Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts)	*Lord Allendale*	Read 1^a 22nd June (1230)
*Public Offices Sites Extension		Read 1^a 22nd June (1230)
Weekly Rest-Day [H.L.]	*Viscount Hill*	Read 2^a 23rd June (1463)

(B.) House of Commons.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Banks (Unclaimed Balances)	*Mr. Bottomley*	Read 1° 17th June (880)
*Bee Pest (Ireland)	*Mr. T. W. Russell*	Read 1° 18th June (1064)
Calendar Reform	*Mr. R. Pearce*	Bill withdrawn 18th June (1169)
*Coal Mines (Eight Hours)	*Mr. Gladstone*	Second Reading adjourned 22nd June (1343)
*County Courts [H.L.]	*Sir W. Robson*	Read 1° 18th June (1004)
*Friendly Societies	*Mr. Runciman*	Committee 19th June (1195)
Infant Life Protection (No. 2)	*Lord R. Cecil*	Read 2° 15th June (675)
Milk Control (Scotland)	*Mr. Watt*	Read 1° 22nd June (1339)
*Old-Age Pensions	*Mr. Lloyd-George*	Second Reading 15th June (564) Read 2° 16th June (729) Allocation of Time 17th June (889) Committee 23rd June (1530) Committee 24th June (1737)
*Patents and Designs [H.L.]	*Mr. Kearley*	Read 2° 19th June (1219)
Pawning Industrial Tools	*Mr. W. T. Wilson*	Read 1° 10th June (278)
Places of Worship (Leasehold Enfranchisement)	*Mr. Massie*	Read 1° 16th June (725)
Police (Weekly Holiday)	*Mr. Remnant*	Read 2° 3rd June (160)
*Prevention of Crime	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 2° 12th June (454)
*Public Health (Markets in Rural Places)	*Mr. Burns*	Committee Report Read 3° and passed 19th June (1177)
*Public Offices Sites (Extension)	*Mr. Harcourt*	Committe Report Read 3° and passed 19th June (1169)
Rule Committee	*Mr. Hills*	Read 1° 3rd June (64)
*Seed Potatoes and Seed Oats Supply (Ireland)	*Mr. Birrell*	Read 1° 22nd June (1340)
Shop Clubs Act (1902) Amendment	*Mr. John Ward*	Read 1° 23rd June (1530)
Traffic Regulation (Metropolis)	*Mr. Carr Gomm*	Read 1° 18th June (1064)

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland)	*Mr. T. W. Russell*	Read 1ª 3rd June (64)
University of Durham	*Mr. Hills*	Read 2° 16th June (836)
Vehicular Traffic (Regulation Speed)	*Mr. B. S. Strauss*	Read 1° 15th June (564)
Wild Birds	*Sir F. Banbury*	Read 1° 17th June (857)

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TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[AUTHORISED EDITION].

NINTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

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Where in the Index * is added with Reading of a Bill, or a Vote in Committee of Supply, it indicates that no Debate took place on that stage of the Bill, or on that Vote.

Subjects discussed in Committee of Supply are entered under their headings, and also under Members' Names, without reference to the actual Vote before the Committee.

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Abraham, Mr. W. [Glamorgan, Rhondda]
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